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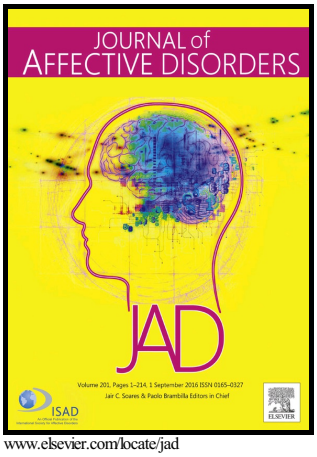

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Evaluation of a Text-Message-Based Maintenance Intervention for Major Depressive Disorder after Inpatient Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

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Abstract

Introduction

High relapse rates in Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) indicate the need for interventions enhancing the sustainability of treatment outcomes. Primary aim of the present study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a text-message-based maintenance intervention for depression (TMMI-D). Additionally, we aimed to clarify whether the use of individualized messages would lead to better outcome than the use of standardized messages which focused upon adaptive ways of regulating undesired emotions.

Methods

In this RCT, 226 individuals who had completed inpatient treatment for MDD were randomly allocated to a condition in which participants received TMMI-D with standardized messages targeting emotion regulation, or to a condition with individualized messages, or to a waitlist control condition. Primary outcome was depressive symptom severity assessed with the BDI-II.

Results

Multilevel analyses suggest that participants receiving TIMMI-D with standardized messages reported a significantly smaller increase of depressive symptoms during the post-treatment and follow-up interval than did patients in the waitlist control condition. Contrastingly, there was no such effect for patients who had used TIMMI-D with individualized messages.

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