

A systematic review and meta-analysis of transdiagnostic cognitive behavioural therapies for emotional disorders

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Transdiagnostic cognitive behavioural psychotherapy (TD-CBT) may facilitate the treatment of emotional disorders. Here we investigate short- and long-term efficacy of TD-CBT for emotional disorders in individual, group and internet-based settings in randomized controlled trials (PROSPERO CRD42019141512). Two independent reviewers screened results from PubMed, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, Google Scholar, medRxiv and OSF Preprints published between January 2000 and June 2023, selected studies for inclusion, extracted data and evaluated risk of bias (Cochrane risk-of-bias tool 2.0). Absolute efficacy from pre- to posttreatment and relative efficacy between TD-CBT and control treatments were investigated with random-effects models. Of 56 identified studies, 53 (6,705 participants) were included in the meta-analysis. TD-CBT had larger effects on depression ($g = 0.74$, 95% CI = 0.57–0.92, $P < 0.001$) and anxiety ($g = 0.77$, 95% CI = 0.56–0.97, $P < 0.001$) than did controls. Across treatment formats, TD-CBT was superior to waitlist and treatment-as-usual. TD-CBT showed comparable effects to disorder-specific CBT and was superior to other active treatments for depression but not for anxiety. Different treatment formats showed comparable effects. TD-CBT was superior to controls at 3, 6 and 12 months but not at 24 months follow-up. Studies were heterogeneous in design and methodological quality. This review and meta-analysis strengthens the evidence for TD-CBT as an efficacious treatment for emotional disorders in different settings.