

Distance treatment – Denmark

Internet psychiatry

– support and treatment from home



THE GLOBAL GOALS



Nordic Council
of Ministers



Government Offices of Sweden
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

 region
västerbotten

Summary

Internet Psychiatry is a nationwide free treatment offer where you can be treated for anxiety and depression over the internet. It can be narrowly defined as the use of video consultation for contact between patients and therapists. It can be used as a common denominator for the provision of distance psychiatric services using information and communication technology.

Internet psychiatry and e-mental health are a form of support and treatment that use digital technologies such as video, online programmes, websites, apps, sensor technology and virtual reality. Citizens answer a questionnaire, which is examined by a psychologist in order to assess whether the person is in the target group for the type of treatment that internet psychiatry can offer.

The treatment takes place on a platform. The patient has to follow a number of treatment steps with accompanying daily exercises. During the treatment the patient learns to work with their thinking patterns. The course lasts 10–12 weeks and is based on cognitive behavioural therapy.

Main effects of the solution

The effect of internet-based psychological treatment of anxiety disorders and depression is particularly effective as a distance psychiatric service that uses information and communication technology. Results shows that there is no difference in the treatment results from traditional therapy in which patients physically meet with a psychologist.

Users

The users are people diagnosed with panic disorder, social anxiety, single phobias or easy to moderate depression from the age of 18 years or above.

A person cannot get treatment with this solution if the person currently is receiving psychotherapeutic or psychiatric treatment or is diagnosed with:

- Schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or related disorders
- PTSD or OCD
- Alcohol or drug abuse

Quotes/Testimonials

"It has been a really really good, process, and I have been really happy with it. I have received a number of helpful tools, including some that I am still using. I have been able to see great benefits (editorial team: by being able to receive the treatment at home), including that it hasn't impacted on my work and my working time – I have been able to do it when it suited me. I have had bad days, for example when I haven't had a bath and washed my hair, but I have still been able to sit at home and take the course, without having to go outside and hide away a little, because my hair was a bit greasy and maybe I wasn't very fresh as I hadn't had a bath."

– Lone, former user of Internet psychiatry

"The technical solution is actually just like using Skype. You turn on your computer and click on the icon, and then you call up the patient in question – it's that simple. And one of the advantages of the patients being at home is that I can see exactly how they are doing when they are relaxed, compared to when they come to visit me, when they may have done their hair and smartened themselves up, and maybe put on a little make-up. When they are at home, I can see what their home looks like and exactly how they are looking and how things are going."

– Lene Damgaard, Nurse, Psychiatric department

Elaboration

Needs and challenges

The number of people with poor mental health is increasing. This solution can help prevent people with mild disorders developing severe mental disorders, as the solution offers easy access to treatment.

Solution and function

People are not forced to leave their homes in order to get help from a professional. They can receive treatment and conduct their "course" whenever it suits their schedule. This means that it is easier to continue working and it also breaks down barriers as patients don't have to face their doctors. Patients follow the course in steps and start a new step approximately every week.

If the patient is not actively taking part in their course, their psychologist will contact them and talk to them about why this is the case.

Implementation

Both patient and care providers will need computers or tablets with WiFi access in order to use the solution. They will be given access to a computer programme containing exercises. Technical aspects must be in order, such as ensuring that the connection works and that it is safe to use.

Economy

The cost is the same whether the patient and psychologist see each other face to face or via a screen. It is likely that more people with symptoms will seek treatment at an early stage, as this minimizes stigma and other barriers associated with visiting a doctor. Patients can also register whenever they wish. The solution costs the patient less as they don't have to spend time travelling and they don't have to take time off from work.

Process

The workflow for treatment providers will change and they will have to get used to seeing and treating patients differently. However, experience shows that this is not difficult and that treatment providers see the benefits of changing traditional treatment methods for some patients.

The way in which patients apply for treatment might be slightly different. However, for the treatment provider, there is very little difference.

Follow-up/monitoring

After 10–12 weeks of treatment, this will be followed-up by a video call between the patient and treatment provider. The patient's GP will receive information about the treatment and the patient's health status.

Communication

The patient and treatment provider communicate via video calls and text messages. The connection will be secure and no data will be seen by anyone other than the patient and treatment provider.

More about effects

As the patient will be at home during the consultation, this will allow the psychologist to assess how the patient functions when they are relaxed because the patient would otherwise have made an effort to style their hair and wear attractive clothes. For some patients it is helpful that the screen creates a distance between the patient and treatment provider.

Learning and tips

Both patients and psychologists will need basic computer skills. The consultation works in the same way as Skype meetings. The treatment provider will help the patient through the steps of the online course, which is very simple.

Further information

- [About Internetpsykiatrien at internetpsykiatrien.dk »](#) (in danish)
- [Centre for Telepsychiatry – Information and contact details »](#)

Context

The solution can be used in all contexts in which people have access to a computer and a good internet connection.

Contact details

Psykiatrien i Region Syddanmark
Lille Grundet Hulvej 25, bygning P, 7100 Vejle

Name of the service

Internetpsykiatri. Telepsykiatrisk Center, Region Syddanmark.

Service provider

[Cisco Jabber](#)