

Internet-based treatment for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder – A study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

Britta Westerberg

Orebro University, Sweden



Abstract

The number of patients diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is increasing rapidly and psychiatric comorbidity is common. The health care system is failing in meeting their needs, contributing to low levels of general life quality, increased psychiatric illness and in the long run increased medical consumption. The field is in great need of new and accessible treatment methods targeting general life quality among these patients. Internet based treatment options is rapidly making its way into health care, and much research supports the effectiveness and applicability of internet based methods. Even though young adults with ASD are a highly digitized group, some spending most of the day online, there are few internet based treatment options available. The aim of this study was to develop, test and evaluate the utility and effectiveness of an internet based treatment method targeting life quality and psychiatric symptoms among Swedish adults with ASD. The method consists of 18 weekly distributed text-based sections including psych education, behavioral and cognitive change strategies based on cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training and internet based group discussions on subjects such as acceptance of difficulties, shared experiences and managing strategies. The method includes home exercises and weekly written therapist feedback. During spring 2019, 84 adults with ASD were recruited and randomized into intervention or control condition. 42 patients underwent the 18 week treatment, delivered through a swedish national platform for online health care. 31 patients completed the therapy and preliminary results of patient satisfaction are promising. The primary effects on life quality are currently (autumn 2019) being analyzed. If the intervention shows effect it would increase access to psychological treatment for a large group of patients with major difficulties in several areas of life.



Biography:

Britta Westerberg is a licensed clinical psychologist and PhD student at Orebro University, Sweden. She is clinically active at Orebro adult habilitation center, a team specialized in Autism, and involved in the research group of professor Susanne Bejerot whom has published extensively in the field of ASD.

Speaker Publications:

1. "Effects of beta-blocker therapy on mortality after elective colon cancer surgery: a Swedish nationwide cohort study, Britta Westerberg, Research gate, July 2020.
2. Reply to the comments by Vorland et al. on our paper: "low-phytate wholegrain bread instead of high-phytate wholegrain bread in a total diet context did not improve iron status of healthy Swedish females: a 12-week, randomized, parallel-design intervention study". July 2020.
3. Antibiotic use and the development of inflammatory bowel disease: a national case-control study in Sweden, August 2020

[2nd European Autism Congress](#); February 28-29, 2020- Budapest, Hungary.

Abstract Citation:

Laura Lyman Debenham, Effective interaction with children with high functioning Autism: From diagnosis to the classroom, Autism 2020, 2nd European Autism Congress; February 28-29, 2020-Budapest, Hungary

(<https://autism.psychiatryconferences.com/abstract/2020/effective-interaction-with-children-with-high-functioning-autism-from-diagnosis-to-the-classroom>)