



E-therapy during a pandemic in Poland and worldwide - a temporary trend or a new reality?

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions to limit the spread of the virus have forced significant changes in human functioning. The changes have affected the lives of both individuals and entire communities.

The changes brought about by the pandemic had to be implemented very quickly, often involving many restrictions on the operation of certain services. In public health, a growing need for psychological help became apparent. Many people, previously skeptical of psychological therapy, expressed a desire for psychological interventions because of the stress of covid 19 (fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones), job loss, uncertainty about the future, and because of changes in lifestyle, working conditions, and reduced social contact.

During the pandemic, due to high demand and the need to maintain social distance, online therapy has become commonplace both in Poland and worldwide, despite the fact that before the pandemic many therapists had concerns about the use of Internet therapy. The question is whether e-therapy is a temporary trend caused by the epidemiological situation in the world, or whether it will become a permanent trend and replace the traditional form until it becomes the norm?

METHODS

Literature analysis (2018-2022) and e-therapy information pages.



<https://milestonesandtransitions.com/electronic-options-providing-counselling-therapy/>

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

E therapy- effectiveness

- E-therapy is effective in treating many mental disorders. (Abbott, Klein, & Ciechomski, 2008). Among others, in alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression during COVID-19 crisis. (Al-Alawi, Al-Maniri, Panchatcharam, & Al Sinawi, 2021).
- E-therapy is also effective in couples therapy. However, professionals cite the following as the greatest difficulties of this type of therapy: establishing a strong therapeutic bond with both partners, dealing with escalating conflict, and interrupting therapy (Machluf, Abba Daleski, Shahar, Kula, & Bar-Kalifa, 2021)

Ethical issues

- New opportunities to benefit from supervision: the supervisor can have a one-on-one chat with the therapist during therapy. Also, reviewing the session may bring new and beneficial learning experiences. (Sahebi, 2020). Ethical difficulties may arise in the area of protecting data collected via the Internet and recording sessions.
- There may be a lack of standardized standards regarding what data a client would have access to (once on the therapists' website) and information regarding safety and security rules for client data online (Rudnicka, Pindych, & Probiez, 2018.)

Doubts and the future of e-therapy

1. Among researchers, there is no shortage of questions regarding the very process of conducting online therapy or the time needed to conduct sessions in the online space, some also suggest the need to create standards for online therapy.
2. The findings provide preliminary qualitative evidence that online therapy can be a useful addition to traditional forms of face-to-face therapy.
3. The answer to the question of whether online therapy will permanently remain in psychological practice remains open. The widespread provision of this type of therapy will probably open the field for further discussion.

KEY WORDS

e-therapy, pandemic, mental health, online therapy