



CLIN-0021

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Telehealth Psychology Services for Patients with Chronic Spinal Pain: The Impact of Illness Beliefs, Working Alliance, and Treatment Expectations

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Chronic spinal pain
= 23% costs of musculoskeletal conditions = 2.4% of total health costs⁽¹⁾

BACKGROUND

- Videoconference psychotherapy is an effective alternative to in-person therapy⁽²⁾
- Patients report comparable therapeutic alliance for telehealth psychology⁽³⁾
- However:**
- Telehealth can be viewed as less credible by patients⁽⁴⁾
- Negative illness beliefs can impact engagement in psychotherapy⁽⁵⁾
- Limited research for chronic spinal pain

HYPOTHESES

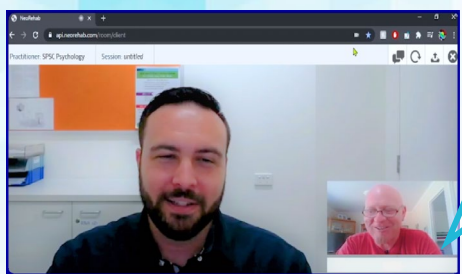
↓ **Illness Beliefs**
(Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire)
& ↓ **Treatment Expectations**
(Credibility/Expectancy Questionnaire-II)
will be associated with:
↓ **Patient Engagement**
(drop out and poor homework adherence)
↓ **Treatment Outcome**
(psychological distress)

with these effects being moderated by
↑ **Working Alliance**
(Working Alliance Inventory-Short Revised)

To explore further process factors:
Patient Empowerment & Technical Problems

DESIGN

- Prospective longitudinal design
- Target of 100 patients of the RBWH SPSC Psychology Telehealth Service
- Digital self-report measures for patients and therapists pre-, during, and post intervention repeated measures



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

F1. Highest Rated Illness Beliefs

Chronic Timeline	M=8.5 (1.8)	/10
Emotional Impact	M=7.4 (1.3)	/10
Consequences	M=6.9 (2.1)	/10
Concern	M=6.4 (3.1)	/10

- Patients' Reported Causes for Their Pain**
- "Don't know", No idea"
 - "Age / worn out"
 - "Weight gain"
 - Injury / Pathology
 - Work-related

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T1. Treatment Credibility & Expectations Compared across Studies

Sample	Credibility Mean(SD)	Expectations Mean(SD)
In-person pain mx sample ^{8a}	19.19 (3.65)	15.36 (4.43)
Current sample^b	13.38 (3.46)	11.5 (4.87)

Notes. ^a N from CBT study group = 57, ^b current study N = 8.

- DISCUSSION**
- Early data collection – no post-intervention data. Alliance & engagement measures to be analysed
 - Illness beliefs consistent with chronic low back pain sample (7) Figure 1. However, emotional impact higher than comparison group.
 - Early data showing lower treatment credibility & expectancy ratings compared to in-person pain management cohort study (8) Table 1. To see if this impacts outcomes in final sample.
 - Implications for best practice in telehealth psychology for spinal pain will be discussed in final report