

# Randomised Control Trial of a culturally adapted psychological therapy for Muslims versus treatment as usual.

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## Background:

Behavioural Activation (BA) has been found to be as effective at treating depression as CBT and has been successfully adapted to be appropriate to the needs of minority groups (Mir et al, 2015; Kanter et al, 2010).

WHO and NICE guidelines suggest that psychotherapies should be culturally appropriate to effectively meet the needs of diverse communities. However, poor uptake of psychological therapy by religious minority groups in the UK has been reported (Choudhry and Mir, 2021).

## Method:

A randomised controlled trial in a Northern England city, with a considerable Muslim population. Individuals accessed either culturally adapted therapy (BA-M) or usual treatment via NHS primary care (IAPT) or a voluntary sector service. Participants were randomised to receive between 6-12 sessions of the culturally adapted therapy or Treatment as Usual (TAU), which consisted of either CBT (via IAPT), or a range of social activities offered by one of three voluntary sector services participating in the study.

Participants were invited to be interviewed about their therapy experience, including how acceptable they found the BA-M approach and how it compared to usual support.

## Results:

142 participants were recruited to the study, with 80 allocated to receive BA-M and 62 to receive TAU. Participants were interviewed about their experiences of BA-M (N=34), from both the voluntary sector and NHS services. Participant interviews included service users (n=18), included some who dropped out of therapy; therapists (n= 9) and managers/supervisors (n= 7).

Statistical evaluation showed BA-M significantly reduced depression scores compared to TAU, primarily through improved engagement with therapy. Both service users and therapists perceived the adapted approach to be more meaningful and motivating than TAU. Where delivery did not follow the protocol, some service users expressed dissatisfaction, indicating the importance of values assessment in delivery of BA-M.

## References:

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