

Implementing Internet-Based Treatment for Non-Cardiac Chest Pain: Randomized Controlled Trial

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Background

Most patients with chest pain referred to hospital do not have a cardiac illness. Non-cardiac chest pain (NCCP) is often followed by persistent distress and reduced quality of life, and societal costs are nearly equal to those of cardiac patients. There is an unmet need for a low-cost and effective treatment for this patient group. The research team have previously developed and tested an internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy (iCBT) for NCCP patients. The treatment was effective in reducing cardiac anxiety and increasing health related quality of life.

Objective

The aim of the present study is to test the efficacy of this internet-based intervention when it is delivered by the cardiac nurses at the ward in a naturalistic setting.

Method

The study takes place at the cardiac department at the Hospital of Southern Norway, Kristiansand. 169 patients are included and randomized to 1) six weekly sessions of iCBT with weekly telephone support by a cardiac nurse and tailored physical activity with increasing intensity or 2) standard care without any restrictions. The six sessions cover different relevant topics like education about the heart, physical activity, interpretations/attention, physical reactions to stress, optional panic treatment, and maintaining change.

The nurses who delivers the intervention have been trained in a two-day course. The outcome measures are fear of bodily symptoms, cardiac anxiety, depression and quality of life.

Results

Preliminary results suggest that it is feasible for cardiac nurses to deliver iCBT to NCCP patients. Results on efficacy are expected first half of 2023.

Trial registration: [ClinicalTrials.gov NCT04094337](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/study/NCT04094337)

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