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Abstract

This paper describes the development and beta-test of an eight-session computer therapy program for anxiety and depression, *Beating the Blues*TM. Developed by a multi-functional team, the program uniquely combines multi-media interactive computer technology with empirically-validated cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques and crucial non-specific aspects of therapy. The paper describes how the project proceeded through its development phase, the unexpected hurdles that occurred and the lessons learnt. As an integral part of the development, the program was beta-tested with 20 patients. Despite the small numbers and the fact that the eight sessions were completed at an accelerated rate, feedback was positive. Patients reported it was helpful, easy to use, and of those who had had previous treatment for their problems, the majority indicated it compared at least as well as other forms of therapy. The beta-test

also highlighted where changes were needed to the program. These were implemented prior to release of the program for the next phase of testing. Lastly, the beta-test indicated that the program had sufficient promise for it to be evaluated formally by randomized controlled trial.



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Keywords

Computer therapy; Computerised psychological treatment; Depression; Anxiety; Cognitive-behavioral therapy

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