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An update of the subjective effectiveness of Voices Group for patients with persistent auditory hallucinations

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Introduction

The Hearing Voices Group (HVG) is a kind of psychological interventions designed specifically for patients presented with persistent and distressing auditory hallucinations despite of adequate pharmacological treatment. The HVG is experiential in nature and incorporates the cognitive-behavioral principles, which have been empirically proven to be effective in reducing distress and mood symptoms associated with auditory hallucinations by modifying one's beliefs and interpretations about the nature and content of auditory hallucinations. The HVG was delivered by 2 clinical psychologists in 4 weekly sessions (1 to 1.5 hours each), with the aims to enhance patients' insight into their illness (e.g., the stress-vulnerability model) and to equip them with effective coping skills to manage their psychological distress associated with voices.

Objectives

(1) To enhance patients' insight into their experiences with auditory hallucinations (i.e., etiology, stress-vulnerability model, neurological and psychological mechanisms underlying auditory hallucinations)(2) To strengthen patients' coping skills (3) To reduce the secondary mood and anxiety symptoms associated with auditory hallucinations

Methodology

All patients were evaluated with an assessment battery at baseline and post-treatment. The assessment battery includes a clinician rating scale (PSYRATS) and three self-report inventories (DASS-21, Beliefs about Voices Questionnaire, and Beck's Cognitive Insight Scale). In addition, patients were asked to fill in a questionnaire to evaluate their satisfaction and subjective effectiveness about the group in the last treatment session.

Result

All patients (n=11) considered the HVG helpful in expanding their coping repertoires, changing their beliefs about voices, and alleviating their psychological distress

associated with voices. The average satisfaction rating on the HVG was 3.55, with 1 indicating very unsatisfactory and 4 indicating very satisfactory. Further statistical analyses would be conducted to evaluate the symptom severity before and after receiving the group treatment.