

## Press release

Please fill in this form and return it to [graduateschoolhealth@au.dk](mailto:graduateschoolhealth@au.dk) in Word format no later than three weeks prior to your defence.

### Basic information

Name: Ditte Hoffmann      Email: [dittjese@rm.dk](mailto:dittjese@rm.dk) Phone: +45 7846 4625 / +45 2343 0590

Department of: Choose one

Main supervisor: Lisbeth Frostholt

Title of dissertation: Internet-delivered Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for health anxiety

Date for defence: 30/11-2018 at (time of day): 14.00 Place: DNC Auditoriet, (Palle Juul-Jensen Auditorium), bygning 10, Aarhus Universitets-hospital, Nørrebrogade 44, 8000 Aarhus C

Press release (Danish)

Helbredsangst kan behandles effektivt over internettet

Nyt ph.d.-projekt fra Aarhus Universitet, Health, viser at patienter med svær helbredsangst kan behandles effektivt over internettet vha. et online behandlingsprogram. Helbredsangst, eller hypokonder tilstand, er karakteriseret af vedvarende bekymringer om at have eller få en alvorlig sygdom. Det er en invaliderende og hyppigt forekommende lidelse på tværs af medicinske specialer. Hurtig og effektiv behandling udfordres af begrænset kapacitet og geografisk afstand til specialiseret behandling samt frygt for stigmatisering ved ambulans behandling. Bag undersøgelsen står psykolog Ditte Hoffmann der forsvare projektet d. 30/11-2018.

Et nyt behandlingskoncept med patient selvhenvielse, videodiagnostisk udredning samt 12 ugers guidet internetbehandling baseret på psykologiske principper muliggjorde at patienter med helbredsangst kunne behandles udelukkende i eget hjem. Behandlingen kunne ligeledes tilgås udenom andre dagligdagsforpligtelser såsom arbejde og familie. Kvalitative interviews i et pilotstudie med 15 patienter viste at konceptet var anvendeligt.

101 patienter deltog i en større randomiseret kontrolleret effektundersøgelse som viste at behandlingen reducerende selvrapporterede helbredsangstsymptomer, generelle angst- og depressive symptomer samt øgede livskvaliteten. De selvhenviste patienter var i høj grad relevante og deres helbredsangst var langvarig og behandlingskrævende. Herudover var den video-diagnostiske udredning acceptabel og tidseffektiv.

Altså kan internetbaseret behandling øge tilgængeligheden af evidensbaseret psykologisk behandling for patienter med helbredsangst, som er dyre for sundhedsvæsenet.

Forsvaret af ph.d.-projektet er offentligt og finder sted den 30/11-2018 kl. 14.00 i DNC Auditoriet, (Palle Juul-Jensen Auditorium), bygning 10, Aarhus Universitets-hospital, Nørrebrogade 44, 8000 Aarhus C. Titlen på projektet er "Internet-delivered Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for health anxiety". Yderligere oplysninger: Ph.d.-studerende Ditte Hoffmann, e-mail: [dittjese@rm.dk](mailto:dittjese@rm.dk), tlf. +45 7846 4625 / +45 2343 0590..

Bedømmelsesudvalg:

Peter Tyrer, Prof. Emeritus, PhD, MD, Dept. of Medicine, Imperial College London, UK

Per Carlbring, Professor, MSc., PhD, Dept. of Psychology, Stockholm University, Sweden

Kaj Sparle Christensen, Professor, PhD, MD, Dept. of Public Health, Aarhus University, Denmark

Press release (English)

Health anxiety can be effectively treated over the internet

A new PhD project from Aarhus University, Health, shows that patients with severe health anxiety can be treated effectively using an internet-based treatment program. Health anxiety, or hypochondriasis, is characterised by persistent worries about having or getting a serious illness. It is disabling and common across medical specialties. Timely and effective treatment is challenged by limited capacity and geographical distance to specialised treatment. Behind the study is psychologist Ditte Hoffmann who defends her dissertation on the 30/11-2018.

A new treatment concept with patient self-referral, video-diagnostic assessment and 12 weeks of guided internet-based treatment built on psychological principles made it possible for patients with health anxiety to receive treatment solely in their own homes. The treatment could thus be accessed whenever it suited the patients in relation to other daily life responsibilities. Qualitative interviews in a pilot study with 15 patients showed that the concept was feasible.

101 patients participated in a large, randomised controlled trial showing that the treatment reduced self-reported health anxiety symptoms and general symptoms of anxiety and depression as well as increased quality of life. The self-referred patients were highly relevant, and their health anxiety was long-standing and treatment-demanding. Moreover, the video-diagnostic assessment was acceptable and time-efficient.

Therefore, internet-based treatment can increase the accessibility to evidence-based psychological treatment for patients with health anxiety; a patient group that suffers greatly and is costly for society in terms of health care use.

The defence is public and takes place on the 30/11-2018 at the DNC Auditorium, (Palle Juul-Jensen Auditorium), in Building 10, Aarhus University Hospital, Noerrebrogade 44, 8000 Aarhus C. The title of the project is Internet-delivered Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for health anxiety. For more information, please contact PhD student Ditte Hoffmann, email: [dittjese@rm.dk](mailto:dittjese@rm.dk), Phone +45 7846 4625 / +45 2343 0590.

Assessment committee:

Peter Tyrer, Prof. Emeritus, PhD, MD, Dept. of Medicine, Imperial College London, UK

Per Carlbring, Professor, MSc., PhD, Dept. of Psychology, Stockholm University, Sweden

Kaj Sparle Christensen, Professor, PhD, MD, Dept. of Public Health, Aarhus University, Denmark

## **Permission**

By sending in this form:

- I hereby grant permission to publish the above Danish and English press releases.
- I confirm that I have been informed that any applicable inventions shall be treated confidentially and shall under no circumstances whatsoever be published, presented or mentioned prior to submission of a patent application, and that I have an obligation to inform my head of department and the university's Patents Committee if I believe I have made an invention in connection with my work. I also confirm that I am not aware that publication violates any other possible holders of a copyright.