

Preliminary results from the ACTyourCHANGE in Teens Protocol: a randomized controlled trial evaluating acceptance and commitment therapy for adolescents with obesity.

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The study shows preliminary results of “The ACTyourCHANGE in Teens” project, a Randomized Controlled Trial aimed at evaluating the efficacy of an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-based intervention combined with treatment as usual (ACT+TAU) compared to TAU only, for improving psychological well-being, psychological distress, experiential avoidance and fusion, emotion dysregulation, and emotional eating in a sample of 34 in-patient adolescents with obesity (Body Mass Index > 97th centile). Mixed between-within 2 x 2 repeated-measures analyses of variances (ANOVAs) were carried out to examine the changes in psychological conditions of participants over time. Moderation analyses were also conducted to test whether pre-test anxiety, depression, stress, and experiential avoidance and fusion predicted emotional eating at post-test with groups (ACT+TAU vs. TAU only) as moderators. Only a significant interaction effect (time x group) from pre- to post-test ($p = 0.031$) and a significant main effect of time on anxiety ($p < 0.001$) and emotional eating ($p = 0.010$) were found. Only in the TAU only group were higher levels of depression ($p = 0.0011$), stress ($p = 0.0012$), and experiential avoidance and fusion ($p = 0.0282$) at pre-test significantly associated with higher emotional eating at post-test. Although future replication and improvements of the study may allow us to obtain more consistent results, this preliminary evidence is actually promising.

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