Helping online therapists: An integrated tool for "guided Internet-delivered treatments"

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INTRODUCTION

Several studies show the feasibility of Internet-delivered treatments
Cognitive behavior therapy, a structured treatment approach, is very suitable for adaptation using ICT (i.e. Cuijpers, van Straten & Andersson, 2008). Different studies have shown its feasibility (i.e. Ritterband et al., 2003, 2006) and satisfactory intervention results (i.e., Anderson et al., 2005; Carlbring et al., 2005, 2006; Norman et al., 2007; Zabinski et al., 2004).

Online support groups facilitate sharing information and experiences and provide interpersonal relationships
An important and extensively used application of the ICT are online support groups (i.e. Barak, Boniel-Nissim & Suler, 2008). Social support plays an important role in helping people cope with their respective problems (i.e. Schneiderman et al., 2001; Schwarzer & Knoll, 2007). Several researches have reported specific and nonspecific effects of online support groups (i.e. Coursaris & Liu, 2009; Gustafson et al., 2001; Winzelberg et al., 2003).

Therapist-patient interaction has a positive effect in Internet treatments
(Carlbring et al., 2003; Tate et al., 2003; Christensen et al., 2006; Palmqvist et al., 2007; Spek et al., 2007)
In general, online therapists use e-mails to keep contact with their patients and provide support, encouragement or direct therapeutic activities (Postel et al., 2008). Andersson (2009) uses a new term to define this approach in Internet-delivered behavioral and health-related interventions: "guided Internet-delivered treatment".

Users activity: patterns of use and their relationship with the results
The empirical research on users and user’s behavior has provided important information for web applications design and development (i.e. Lazar, 2003). By analyzing the users’ activity on e-Health programs, we could relate the patterns of use with the results on the program (Strecher, 2007). In the graphic we can see two series of hits registered during the first session. One belongs to a user that finished the program and the other to a user that dropped out at the fourth session. Which graphic belongs to each user?

THE PROPOSAL

The goal of this poster is to propose a solution, integrated in the online intervention program, for monitoring and developing the therapeutic activity. This aims to facilitate the therapist’s job, by giving him access to the patient’s activity information and by keeping the interaction between the therapist and the patient.

Fig. 1 - Overview of the program’s participants group
 Queries pending therapist’s answer
 Participants’ state of execution
 Access to the patients’ individual records

Fig. 2 - Patient’s individual file
 Unread notifications sent to the patient
 Last time the patient accessed the program

Pending therapist’s feedback
 Patient’s self-monitoring data