

How social anxiety can be overcome with internet

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In the current issue of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* a study analyzes the effects of internet-based cognitive behavior therapy for social anxiety. Social anxiety disorder (SAD) is one of the most common mental disorders in Western countries. Even though the prevalence in China is much lower (0.2%), it translates into an enormous number of people (approx. 200 million adult people) in need for treatment of mental disorders. Internet interventions might be an easily accessible and cost-effective way to deliver evidence-based treatment for mental disorders to people who otherwise never would have the opportunity to receive effective treatment.

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The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of an established self-help program for increased social anxiety in a Chinese population using self-guided ICBT and therapist guided ICBT. The self-guided ICBT program was derived from a well-studied ICBT program translated into Chinese and culturally adapted by 8 clinical psychologists. Participants were 75 patients with SAD, 69 patients with comorbid SAD and major depression disorder, and 53 individuals with increased social anxiety symptoms but not meeting the criteria for SAD. Results showed that anxiety measures significantly decreased after the interventions. In addition, pairwise comparisons after 8 weeks showed that both ICBT conditions were superior to the wait list and that there was no difference between the ICBT conditions.

These findings suggest that the effects of a self-guided ICBT intervention were not different from the effects of a guided ICBT intervention in social anxiety in Chinese people.

More information: Tomoko Kishimoto et al. Internet-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Social Anxiety with and without Guidance Compared to a Wait List in China: A Propensity Score Study, *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* (2016). [DOI: 10.1159/000446584](https://doi.org/10.1159/000446584)

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