



The Effectiveness of Online Psychotherapy Interventions for Perinatal Mental Health Disorders: A Systematic Review

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The Effectiveness of Online Psychotherapy Interventions for Perinatal Mental Health Disorders: A Systematic Review

Black R, Sinclair M, Miller P. W, Reid B, McCullough J, Slater P, Tesler Stein M, Farrell D



Introduction

Maternal mental health can have an impact on the infant both antenatally and throughout the life course, with social, emotional and cognitive consequences (Goodman, 2019). Perinatal mental health (PMH) disorders have been found to be the leading cause of suicide in pregnancy and in the first year after birth with suicide in this period accounting for between 5-20% of maternal deaths in high income countries (Khalifeh et al, 2016; Knight et al, 2019).

The recent impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the importance of individuals being able to safely access therapy remotely.

Methods

PICO Population	Description
Interventions	Evidence-based online (Computer/web-based) psychotherapies to treat mental health issues within the perinatal period.
Comparisons	Face-to-face treatment, treatment as usual (TAU), waitlist, pre-test/post-test outcome results,
Outcomes	Improved clinical outcomes, adverse effects, attrition rates
Study Design	Experimental designs e.g. Randomised Control Trials, pre-post quasi-experimental design

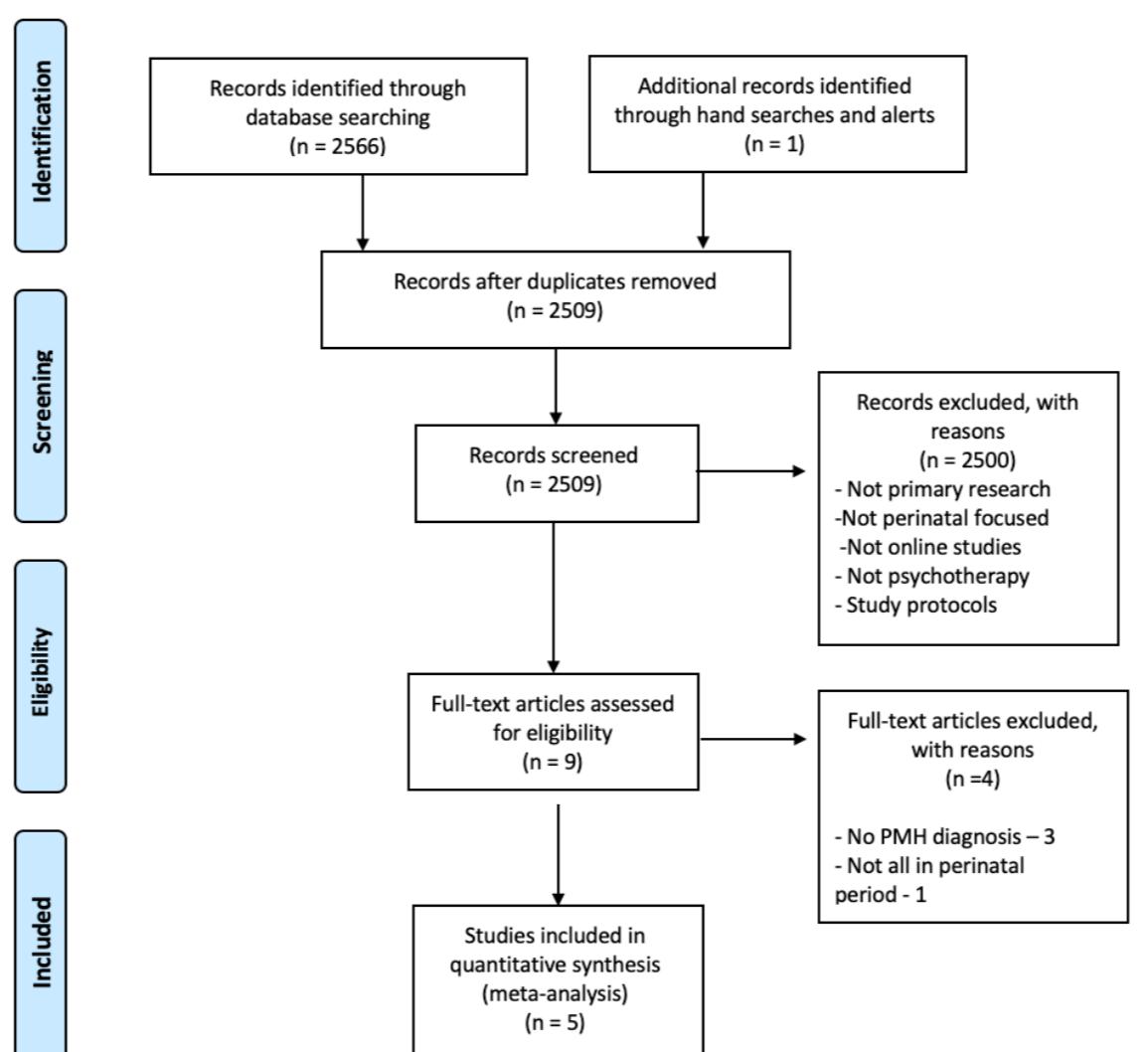
Databases: PsycINFO, Medline, CINAHL Complete, Proquest Dissertations and Theses, Scopus, Google Scholar and The Shapiro Library (before July 2020)

Quality assessment: the Standard Quality Assessment Criteria for Evaluating Primary Research Papers from a Variety of Fields (QualSyst).

Aim

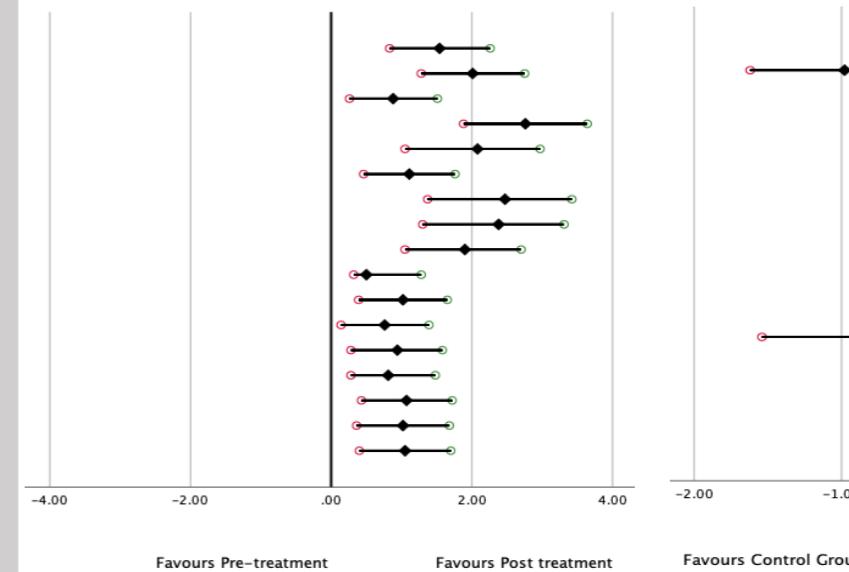
The aim of this review was to provide a synthesis of current evidence for effective psychotherapeutic interventions delivered via online modalities for women with a perinatal mental health diagnosis.

Findings

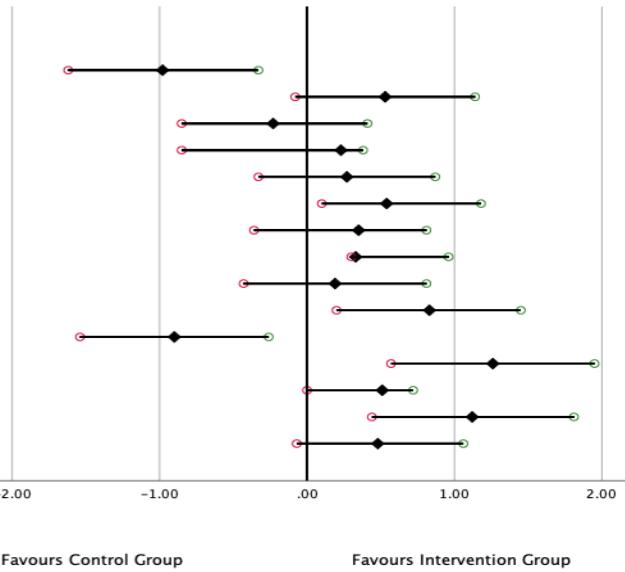


- 3 Targeting postnatal depression and 2 targeting antenatal depression
- CBT based interventions
- High Quality based on QualSyst scores
- Treatment fidelity not reported.
- Attrition rates comparable with other online psychotherapy for non-perinatal populations

Within-group pooled effects



Between-group pooled effects



Within Group: large treatment effect for depression, anxiety and stress outcomes ($d = 1.90$; $d = 0.81$; $d = 1.05$).

Between Group: small to medium effect favouring the intervention versus control on reduction of depressive symptoms ($d = 0.48$, 95% CI -0.07, 1.06).

Conclusions

- Online psychotherapy is effective in improving clinical outcomes in perinatal depression and anxiety
- Gap in the research literature for online EMDR interventions and interventions for other perinatal mental health disorders
- Lack of online psychotherapy for perinatal mental health delivered via videoconferencing

