Poster Abstract

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a commonly used treatment for a variety of substance use disorders (SUD) but has not been evaluated using the American Psychological Association's "Tolin Criteria" which serves as the current standard for determining the empirical basis of psychological treatments. The current systematic review of reviews evaluated five meta-analyses of CBT for SUD. One meta-analysis had sufficient quality to be considered in the evaluation of effect sizes. CBT produced small to moderate effects on substance use, including quantity and frequency, when compared to inactive treatment and was most effective at early follow-up (1-6 months post-treatment; g_{range} = 0.18-0.42) compared to late follow-up (8+ months post-treatment; g = 0.05). Sensitivity analyses including all five meta-analyses found a similar pattern of results. A "strong" recommendation was provided for CBT as an empirically supported treatment for SUD, based on the intervention's effects on substance use, quality of the evidence, and consideration of additional contextual factors (e.g., efficacy in diverse populations, efficacy across multiple substances, and efficacy across a variety of settings). This evaluation offers the first examination of the status of CBT for SUD as an empirically supported treatment according to the Tolin Criteria. Formal recognition may help encourage insurance reimbursement for CBT and inspire further dissemination of and training in CBT.