

SUPPORTIVE TEXT MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS WITH ALCOHOL USE DISORDER AND COMORBID DEPRESSION - HOW USEFUL ARE THEY FOR THE PATIENTS

V.I.O. Agyapong¹, J. Milnes², C.K. Farren²

¹Department of Psychiatry, University of Dublin, ²Department of Psychiatry, St Patrick's University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland

Background: Despite the potential for using text message technology to manage patients with Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) and comorbid depression, very little is known about the mechanism by which this improvement occurs.

Aim: The aim of this study was to examine the perception of patients with AUD and comorbid depression about the usefulness of supportive text messages.

Methods: Participants (n=26) with AUD and depression and completing an in-patient dual diagnosis treatment programme had twice daily supportive text messages delivered to their mobile phones for three months. Participants' views were sought on the usefulness of the supportive text messages using a self-designed semi-structured questionnaire.

Results: Overall, 24 out of 26 patients were contactable for feedback giving a response rate of 92%. Of these 24 patients, 20(83%) reported that they always or often read the supportive text messages. 19(79%) patients expressed the view that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the frequency with which the text messages were delivered with the same number reporting that the messages made them to feel supported by the team. 18(75%) patients reported that the text messages always or often reminded them to remain abstinent from alcohol. Finally, 20(83%) patients reported that the intervention had played a useful role in helping to improve their mental health.

Conclusion: Text messages could help patients with AUD and depression remain abstinent and improve upon their mental wellbeing by providing increase support for patients.