News

Crowdfunding: “Toothbrush for the soul”

Psychotherapy is highly effective but its effects often diminish over time once treatment ends because old thought and behavioral patterns resurface. In order to achieve more sustainable effects, we have developed a beta version of an app in which users receive regular push notification reminders to complete short exercises, similar to those they might have completed during therapy. Serving as a “toothbrush for the soul”, users can work on their mental health every day, just as brushing teeth every day helps to keep them healthy. Improving upon our previous app, our goal is to construct a new app that allows users to individualize existing exercises and add their own ones. In this way, users can turn the app into their own personalized mental health “toothbrush.” The app will be developed first in German and then in English, other languages should follow. We are committed to offering the app free of charge to those suffering from mental health issues but development is expensive. Therefore, we need your help to raise approximately 15.000€. For more information, including how you can donate, see here.

Meta-analyses show efficacy of metacognitive training for psychosis (MCT)

Two meta-analyses show that patients with psychosis benefit significantly from our metacognitive training for psychosis (MCT) compared to a control group in terms of positive symptoms. The meta-analyses can be found here.

Download

- Meta_Analysen_MKT_Psychose.zip (1.1 MiB)

Profile

Our working group is engaged in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of psychiatric disorders. We also conduct research on (meta)cognitive biases and deficits present in psychiatric disorders. We are also active in the development of online programs including apps. The heads of the Clinical Neuropsychology Working Group are Prof. Steffen Moritz and Prof. Lena Jelinek. Founding members are Prof. Burghard Andresen and Prof. Reinhard Maß.

Research

We conduct research on a variety of psychiatric diseases, including schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, and borderline personality disorder, in collaboration with our German and international research partners. Our work is funded by grants from the government and mental health
research organizations, as well as by donations from individual sponsors. We conduct clinical research utilizing established neuropsychological tasks and questionnaires, as well as self-developed experimental cognitive paradigms. We are also at the forefront of online research methods and have recently conducted several studies on online psychological treatments. Our current research projects are described in more detail on this website (see the Research tab above). We always appreciate comments or questions about our research (moritz@uke.de)!

Treatment of Cognitive Disorders

Since 2000, we have been developing and conducting research on a psychological intervention called metacognitive training for psychosis (MCT). The training targets metacognitive processes (i.e., thinking about thinking) with the goal of improving everyday functioning and symptoms. We have adapted and developed MCT for other disorders (borderline personality disorder and depression) for treatment in a group setting. A manual for the individual treatment of patients with schizophrenia (MCT+) and a self-help manual for patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder (myMCT) are also available. We are currently conducting several studies to assess all interventions in relation to their acceptance, feasibility, and effectiveness among patients. Moreover, we have devised a new technique to decrease obsessive thoughts that has been evaluated as successful in several studies (association splitting).

Assessment and Diagnostics

Standard neuropsychological methods are used for the assessment of patients. The most frequent diagnostic questions are:

- diagnostic verification of dementia (especially the differential diagnosis of depression), amnestic syndrome (in the context of substance dependence), or attention deficit / hyperactivity disorder
- validation of subjective cognitive complaints
- intelligence assessment (e.g., in cases of suspected intellectual deficit)
- assessment of ability to work and/or attend school or university
- verification of neuropsychological dysfunctions secondary to drug or alcohol use

The possible influences of psychopathological conditions and medication, as well as the impact of test anxiety and motivation, on neuropsychological functioning are carefully considered in our final written reports. Each year we process approximately 350 requests from the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy of the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf.

B.Sc., M.Sc. and Ph.D. theses

We offer students opportunities to be involved in our group’s various research projects. As a part of this, students may be able to work on their bachelor’s thesis, master’s thesis and Ph.D. dissertation. If you are interested, please send an email with relevant attachments (e.g., letters of reference) to Steffen Moritz (moritz@uke.de) – please, no "snail mail". Good command of the German language is advantageous.