



EQUITY Newsletter #1

PATIENT PERSPECTIVES

May 2021

EQUITY is a 5-year National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Programme of research aimed at enhancing the quality of and improving engagement with psychological interventions delivered by telephone in Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Services.

'This research is important in helping us build a new system that best meets the needs of patients and therapists, and the COVID pandemic has further emphasised the importance of such ways of working.' - Anne Ryan,
EQUITY Lived Experience
Advisory Panel member

STUDY 1: PATIENT INTERVIEWS

Purpose: To explore patients' perspectives of telephone-delivered psychological treatment, to identify areas for change in the current IAPT service.

What we did:

28 interviews with

- patients experiencing symptoms of common mental health problems (e.g. anxiety and/or depression)
- patients who were waiting for, receiving or had recently received telephone-delivered psychological treatment (via IAPT)

PUBLISHED RESEARCH PAPER:

Rushton K., et al. (2020). 'I didn't know what to expect': Exploring patient perspectives to identify targets for change to improve telephone-delivered psychological interventions. *BMC Psychiatry*, 7;20(1):156.

Available here: <https://rdcu.be/cfS22>

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WHAT WE FOUND

Some of the key areas (affecting early stages of treatment) identified as important were:

- **Patient knowledge and understanding** including uncertainty about the practitioner's skills/qualifications and the treatment delivery options available.
- **Patient reservations** about the effectiveness of telephone treatment, with face-to-face seen as the superior treatment requiring more advanced practitioner skills.
- **Practical limitations** faced by patients including the absence of visual information and non-verbal cues that they thought were important to establish a good relationship/bond.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

There may be value in:

- **Communicating** details about the treatment and highlighting the training & qualifications of the practitioner.
- **Highlighting** the positives of telephone-delivered psychological treatment and promoting it using established evidence for this mode of delivery, rather than the 'shorter waiting times' associated with it.
- **Enhancing** training to optimise patient and practitioner engagement in treatment where there's a lack of visual cues (including improving signals to demonstrate listening and to convey empathy).