A systematic review of methods for assessing competence in cognitive–behavioural therapy

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Abstract

Effective assessment of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) competence is crucial to the success of the current drive to expand CBT training and service provision, and to the widespread dissemination of CBT into routine practice. However, a lack of consensus about how CBT competence should be assessed has resulted in the use of numerous different methods, many of which have been widely criticised. This review describes and evaluates the various methods of assessing CBT competence. A systematic literature search identified 64 articles pertaining to a method of assessing competence in the provision of standard CBT interventions to adults experiencing mental health problems. Ten methods for assessing CBT therapist competence were identified from these articles and are presented within Miller's framework for assessing clinical skill. The advantages and disadvantages of each method are examined in relation to reliability, validity and feasibility. The limitations of the current evidence base are outlined and priorities for future research are highlighted. Tentative recommendations for assessing therapist competence are made within the context of the limited evidence base and need for feasibility in clinical practice settings.

Highlights

- Systematic review of methods for assessing CBT therapist competence. - Advantages and disadvantages of ten assessment methods are examined in relation to reliability, validity and feasibility. - Recommendations for assessing CBT therapist competence are made. - Priorities for future research are highlighted.

Keywords

CBT; Cognitive behavioural therapy; Competence; Clinical skill; Assessment

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