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Internet-based psychological interventions to improve mental health: Preference for and willingness to use among students in a Nigerian university

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Abstract

Objective: To assess the willingness and preference for Internet-Based Mental Health interventions among university students using a validated self-administered questionnaire, the Mental Health Literacy Questionnaire (MHLq) and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12).

Design: A cross-sectional multi-staged randomized study.

Setting: The setting was the University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Subjects: A total of 3,300 undergraduate students were assessed.

Main Outcome Measures: The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics, and regression analysis to predict factors associated with

willingness and preference was done. Level of significance was set at p-value of 0.05 and confidence interval at 95%.

Results: Preference for Internet-Based Mental Health intervention compared to Face-to-Face intervention was 27.7% amongst the 3,179 analyzable questionnaires, while 48.6% respondents were willing to use Internet-Based Mental Intervention. Predictors of willingness to use internet-based support were monogamous family setting (aOR= 1.486), help seeking behaviour (aOR= 2.683) and probable mental illness (aOR= 0.333) while predictors of preference for Internet-Based Intervention over Face-to-Face therapy were younger age (aOR= 1.377), female gender (aOR =1.342), satisfactory relationship with mother and father (aOR = 1.607. 1. 466 respectively), self-help strategies (aOR= 0.713) and good knowledge of mental health (aOR =1.610).

Conclusion: Internet-Based Interventions is a viable choice for improving university students' mental health. Further studies may explore acceptability and use of different aspects of internet-based interventions

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