

New study shows cognitive behaviour therapy effective in treating older Australians with anxiety and depression

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(Medical Xpress)—New research from Macquarie University has revealed that cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) can be effective in

treating comorbid depression and anxiety in older Australians, with improvements continuing three months later.

In the lead up to the United Nations' International Day of Older Persons on Tuesday 1 October, researchers from the University's Centre for Emotional Health released results that show psychological treatment has had a positive impact in reducing the symptoms of sixty-two adults aged more than 60 years who have comorbid anxiety and [depression](#).

Lead researcher Dr Viviana Wuthrich says the research assists in filling a gap that currently exists, where previously little research has been conducted to examine the value of [psychological treatment](#) methods in both depression and anxiety comorbidity.

"Anxiety and depression are commonly comorbid in older adults, and are associated with worse physical and mental health outcomes and poorer response to psychological and pharmacological treatments," said Dr Wuthrich.

"However surprisingly the majority of past studies have focused on the treatment of primary depression or anxiety separately, and not their comorbidity. This study offers a good indication that an effective way to combat both of these conditions simultaneously is to offer [cognitive behavioural therapy](#) in groups."

Participants took part in a twelve-week program comprising of two hour sessions in groups of six to eight. They conducted self-assessments and were also assessed by clinicians unaware of treatment condition. Results revealed recovery rates three months after the CBT program in the [treatment](#) group was found to be 52%, compared to just 11% of participants placed in a waitlist group. Further, significant reliable change was shown by 74% of CBT participants compared to 23% of waitlist participants on clinician rated severity of their main problem,

and by 40-50% of CBT participants compared with

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