Journal of Psychiatric Research 116 (2019) 195

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Psychiatric Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jpsychires

Response to letter

We welcome the comments by Dr. Firth and Dr. Torous on our systematic review (Wang et al., 2018), and we embrace their commendations. In response, we would like to point out that the results description and the summary of our paper were not at all overly positive as they perceived, as we "*found that only 14 out of approximately 100 studies that reportedly utilized an app had a clinically validated evidence of the effectiveness. This finding is alarming …*"

As the objective of our systematic review stated, we discussed validated apps, along with other seven restrictive criteria, i.e. not generic smartphone-based interventions or trials. Dr. Firth's and Dr. Torous' further insights on studies that would not have met all the criteria –yet in our denominator, which is over 100, not 16– evidence from (negative) RCTs, their own seminal meta-analyses, and articles that were published after our literature search was finalized, demonstrate that the problem is at large at all stages of development, besides deployment. To corroborate prior and concomitantly published works, rather than contradicting them, in our review we showed that there was substantial variety in the definition of outcomes, and evaluation means of effectiveness (e.g. with *PartyPlanner*). In regards to the 'digital placebo' and reporting bias, we recognize the importance of the problem of misestimating beneficial effects (distinguishing effectiveness, usability and users' satisfaction), and the need for reconciling extant theory with evidence.

In conclusion, we thank Dr. Firth and Dr. Torous for their contribution and we look forward to concerting efforts from the community to address challenges in mHealth research and development for mental health.

Conflict of interest

None.

Reference

Wang, K., Varma, D.S., Prosperi, M., 2018. A systematic review of the effectiveness of mobile apps for monitoring and management of mental health symptoms or disorders. J. Psychiatr. Res. 107, 73–78.

Kai Wang, Deepthi S. Varma, Mattia Prosperi*
Department of Epidemiology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA
E-mail address: m.prosperi@ufl.edu (M. Prosperi).

* Corresponding author.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2018.12.011
Received 19 November 2018; Accepted 6 December 2018
0022-3956/ © 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.