Online Talk Therapy Works as Well as an In-Person Session, a New Study Shows

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Talking to your therapist over Zoom is as helpful for anxiety and depression as going to in-person therapy. The virtual session, moreover, can be delivered at any lower cost, according to a large new study conducted in the U.K.

Online therapy has become more and more prevalent since the COVID pandemic, when lockdowns forced lots of therapists online. The new study suggests that one of the biggest benefits of virtual therapy may be that it can allow people to get treatment faster, which increases their quality of life and reduces the amount of additional medical care they require—and thus cuts costs overall.

“The actual cost of mental health care doesn’t come from treating these conditions but from not treating them,” says study co-author Ana Catarino, director of clinical science at ieso Digital Health, a U.K. company that contracts with the country’s National Health Service (NHS) to provide virtual treatments.

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