Experiences of training in Physiotherapy informed by Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (PACT) for chronic low back pain: A qualitative study

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The PACT Study: a novel cognitive-behavioural approach

- **The PACT Study** – two-arm RCT comparing effect of PACT versus UC on physical functioning (RMDQ) at 3 and 12 months (ISRCTN95392287)

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for Physiotherapy:
  - Process- and relationship-oriented cognitive-behavioural approach
  - Targets behaviour-change and improves function (Hann & McCracken 2014)
  - Congruent with physiotherapist skills (e.g., values-based goal setting)

“...At the moment, all that happens is, as you go through your degree, it’s all about CBT, but you don’t really do any CBT.” (P10, Band 6, Male)
The PACT Training Programme for Physiotherapists

- Face-to-face group sessions
- PACT Training Manual
- 1-2-1 Supervised practice
- Monthly group feedback and supervision
Methods

What are the experiences of physiotherapists in training and early delivery of PACT?

• In-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews

• 11 Band 6/7 therapists (n=3 male) from 4 NHS sites in Greater London

• Thematic analysis using the Framework Method applied to explain and understand physiotherapists experiences (Gale et al 2013)

• Member-checks and triangulation carried out to validate data
Results: Explanatory Themes

Valued ongoing practice and reflection
- Focus on active learning (e.g., role play)
- Translation of abstract concepts to delivery

Backed learning with training materials
- Training Manual targeted skills and needs
- Facilitates independent learning, early delivery

Barriers and facilitators to implementation
- ACT and physiotherapy a “good fit”
- Patient expectations and therapist preferences

Perceived outcomes of training
- Reassuring balance of new and refined skills
- Empowered by tangible skills, readily deliverable
- Ongoing training for competency, confidence
Conclusions and practical implications

• PACT training and intervention are acceptable to physiotherapists

• Implementation of PACT training could broaden the skills and scope of practice of physiotherapists treating CLBP patients

“If people are given the right training... then I think it’s really fits well with what we do and probably enhances our other treatment as well.”

(P3, Band 7, Female)
References


Acknowledgement

This presentation presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) under its Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme (Grant Reference Number PB-PG-1112-29055). The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health.