Aim: Precision psychiatry for grief

Research Objectives: Mobile apps provide an accessible and adaptable platform for mental health assessment and monitoring. They can provide real time, day to day data on symptoms of mental disorders that may yield fine grained data for assessment and help individuals gain insight into their current mental state.

Here we present the recent results from a 1) scoping review of experience sampling methodology (ESM) for grief and trauma alongside 2) a pilot study examining the acceptability of ESM for bereaved individuals is presented.

Pilot study1

Figure 2

In a pilot feasibility study, we assessed the feasibility and acceptability of this new mobile app for grief; use once a day for 3 weeks. 27 participants completed mental health assessments at t1 and t2.

Scoping review2

Flowchart of the study selection process for grief papers

- Adherence to the app protocol was very high with 100% for the first two weeks of use.
- Improvement of grief symptoms at t2.
- Debriefing interviews revealed overall the app was found to be feasible for use for the first two weeks and acceptable for bereaved individuals.
- Preliminary analysis suggests significant grief variability within and between individual response sets despite overall improvement.

Flowchart of the study selection process for trauma papers

- Half of the studies focused on acceptability and adherence, the others focused on symptom change over several time points.
- Analysis of nine studies highlights strong adherence to the ESM protocol and acceptability of the intensive measurement for both grief and trauma symptoms.
- Findings suggest that ESM does not worsen grief symptoms and may reduce the severity.
- ESM impact on trauma symptoms varies, with some studies noting increased severity.

Future directions

- First combined longitudinal study and daily monitoring on PGD
- Complex statistical modeling on large scale data, computational methods
- Multiple disorders: PGD, PTSD, MDD
- World’s first PGD monitoring app, free, accessible, different languages

Implications

ESM measurement could provide valuable data for in depth clinical assessment and may support individuals to gain greater insight into their grief symptoms. What if we could predict and prevent the development of mental disorder? The short-term impact of this work will be an effective, evidence based, detection system. The long-term impact will be the prevention of disorder.

Research team/publications

OSF link: https://osf.io/gc9dj/

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