

## Long-term success of cognitive behaviour therapy for psychosis

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) for psychosis makes a real difference to people's lives in the longer term. That's the conclusion of research carried out by psychologists who run the Psychological Interventions Clinic for outpatients with Psychosis (PICuP), an NHS service in south London.

PICuP was originally set up in 1999 to test the effectiveness of CBT at a time when the concept of a talking therapy for people with schizophrenia or other illnesses involving the symptoms of psychosis was still relatively new.

Research carried out at PICuP helped prove that CBT could help alleviate some of the distressing symptoms of psychosis – such as voice-hearing and delusions – and contributed to the evidence that led to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommending CBT for psychosis as a treatment for people with schizophrenia and people with bipolar disorder. Meanwhile, PICuP was so successful that in 2003 it became a mainstream specialist psychological therapies service offered by South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) to people with psychosis.

PICuP is led by Professor Elizabeth Kuipers and Dr Emmanuelle Peters, both psychologists at SLaM and also researchers at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London. They and their colleagues have collected information about people's symptoms, emotional problems and general well-being on a routine basis since PICuP became a specialist NHS service (as opposed to a service set up for research purposes). An analysis of this information has now shown that the positive effects of CBT are long lasting.

The original research showed that 180 people, who had each received between five and 59 sessions of CBT for psychosis from therapists working at PICuP, had 'significant improvements' – in psychotic symptoms, depression, anxiety and quality of life – immediately after therapy.

Two years later, they followed up 43 people who had had the therapy (as many people as they could find from the original 180). 'We found that all the significant improvements were still there nearly two years later,' said Dr Peters.

'Our results provide support for the long-term effectiveness of CBT for psychosis in an NHS psychological therapies service, and show that gains are maintained.

'At PICuP, cognitive behaviour therapy for psychosis is conducted in a flexible style, is focused on an individual client's own goals and given alongside medication. All therapists receive expert supervision,' she said.

■ To find out more about PICuP, visit the SLaM website where you can download a booklet about the service.  
[www.national.slam.nhs.uk/services/adult-services/picup/resources/](http://www.national.slam.nhs.uk/services/adult-services/picup/resources/)

● ER Peters, T Constable, L Smith, K Greenwood, E Hunter, L Johns, E Kuipers (2011). The long-term effectiveness of cognitive behaviour therapy for psychosis within a routine clinical service. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 37, Suppl 1, p.278

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