

Delivering a 'Massive Open Online Course' on Interactions Between Physical and Mental Illness, Focusing on Depression and Anxiety in Chronic Physical Illness

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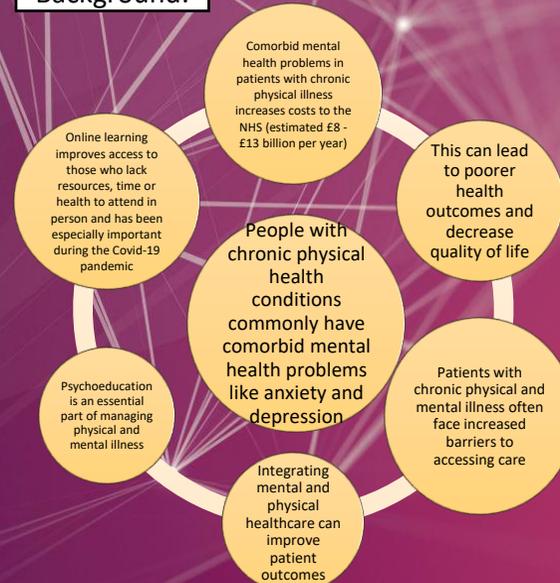
Aims:

- Empower patients and carers by providing psychoeducation on the overlap of depression/anxiety and physical illness
- Raise awareness of symptoms and signs of depression/anxiety, self-management strategies, and treatment options
- Improve skills of general healthcare professionals in recognising and managing common mental health problems in patients with chronic physical illness
- Reduce stigma surrounding mental health
- Create an online community for shared discussion and learning between patients and their carers, healthcare professionals and interested members of the public
- Maximise accessibility by creating a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) which is free and available to all

Methods:

- Content was steered by the Integrated Care Consultation Partners Group (ICCPG), which brings together the insight and expertise of 15 patients and carers with lived experience of mental-physical comorbidity
- A 3-week course was devised with 2 hours of weekly learning. Learning tools included multimedia resources, patient narratives, and interactive exercises and quizzes. This was digitalised with help from the King's Online MOOC Strategy Group and hosted on the FutureLearn platform
- A video trailer was produced and disseminated through mental and physical health charities worldwide and IMPARTS, IoPPN and Kings networks
- The course has run in September 2018, January and September 2019, and June 2020

Background:



Results:

- 26,986 people in total enrolled from over 150 countries. 13,096 of these were 'active learners', with over 7400 course finishers
- In June 2020, 65% of survey respondents said the course was better than expected. 96% reported gaining new knowledge or skills and 7% said they shared their learning with others.
- A pre and post course Likert-questionnaire completed by attendees in January 2019 showed student confidence and knowledge of depression and anxiety in physical illness increased (from 26.06/35 to 32.5/35), $p < 0.000$.

Learner Feedback:

- "This course has been a life changer for me, and I finally understand the mind and body link. Excellent examples and very brave and open people that will have helped so many people know it is OK to feel like this and that there is help available should you need it"
- "It's been a fantastic experience. The varied and interactive format was engaging and the content very clear and sensitively-presented, but without dumbing-down. It was great to have an open forum where professionals, patients and carers could discuss issues together instead of only getting feedback from our own 'bracket'"
- "I have learned so much from this course watching & listening to the videos of patients sharing their stories and experiences with us. Thank you for all this precious information which I will use and exercise in my daily life from today on"
- "I can't thank you all enough for this course. If I can paraphrase the outcomes in one simple but effective phrase: I feel better! Thank you again!"

Course Structure:

- **Week 1:** The nature, scale and impact of depression/anxiety in physical illness, and how integrating care affects patient outcomes and experience
- **Week 2:** Taking about distress in illness: how to open up conversations and identify symptoms and signs of depression/anxiety in physical illness
- **Week 3:** Coping strategies and treatment options: prevention, self-management, talking therapies and medication

Conclusions:

The IMPARTS MOOC has been popular with health professionals, patients, carers, and members of the public worldwide. It has improved attendees' confidence and knowledge of depression and anxiety in physical illness. Many of the students share their learning with others resulting in a wider public health benefit.