

Understanding mental illness and promoting mental health- Experiences of Exhaustion Disorder and Effects of a Person-Centred eHealth Intervention

Akademisk avhandling

Som för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen vid Sahlgrenska akademien, Göteborgs universitet kommer att offentligens försvaras i hörsal Arvid Carlsson, Academicum, Medicinaregatan 3, den 3 juni, klockan 13.00

Av Sara Alsén

Fakultetsopponent: Sigrid Stjernswärd, Universitetslektor Docent, Lunds universitet

Avhandlingen baseras på följande delarbeten

- I. Alsén S, Ali L, Ekman I, Fors A. Facing a blind alley – experiences of stress-related exhaustion: a qualitative study. *BMJ Open*. 2020;10(9).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-038230>
- II. Alsén S, Ali L, Ekman I, Fors A. Having allies – experiences of support in people with stress-related exhaustion: a qualitative study. *Submitted*
- III. Cederberg M, Alsén S, Ali L, Ekman I, Glise K, Jonsdottir IH, Gyllensten H, Swedberg K, Fors A. Effects of a Person-Centered eHealth Intervention for Patients on Sick Leave Due to Common Mental Disorders (PROMISE Study): open randomized controlled trial. *JMIR Ment Health*. 2022 Mar 15;9(3):e30966.
<https://doi.org/10.2196/30966>
- IV. Alsén S, Hadzibajramovic E, Jonsdottir IH, Ali L, Fors A. Effectiveness of a person-centred eHealth intervention in relation to symptoms of burnout in patients on sick leave due to common mental disorders - Secondary outcome analysis of a randomised controlled trial. *In manuscript*.

Understanding mental illness and promoting mental health- Experiences of Exhaustion Disorder and Effects of a Person-Centred eHealth Intervention

Sara Alsén

Institute of Health and Care Sciences, Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, 2022.

Abstract

Health is subjective, involving the whole person, and cannot be determined by others. It is a resource in life, not merely the absence of disease and illness. Common mental disorders (CMDs), including stress-related conditions, are a growing public health problem in Sweden and account for an increasing proportion of sick leave due to psychiatric diagnoses. **The overall aim** of this thesis was to build an understanding of the meaning of being affected by exhaustion disorder (ED), and to explore experiences of support and evaluate the effects of a person-centred eHealth intervention in patients on sick leave due to CMDs. **A multi-method** qualitative and quantitative approach was used to gather and analyse data. Studies I and II involved interviews with twelve people affected by ED; the aim was to describe and interpret their experiences of being affected by ED and of support in the process of promoting health. Studies III and IV report from a randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluating the effects of a person-centred eHealth intervention (consisting of phone support and a digital platform) in primary care patients (n=209) on sick leave due to CMDs. The **findings** show that people with ED experience existential challenges and need allies in their struggle for acknowledgement as persons. Person-centred eHealth support improves self-efficacy and partly decreases symptoms of burnout. Still, it does not seem to affect sick leave for patients with CMDs. This thesis **concludes** that the illness perspective and health-promoting care initiatives need a broader recognition in health care and other institutional organizations that encounter people with CMDs. This approach begins with interpersonal relationships where professionals need to meet the patient as a person rather than the disease alone, which is emphasized in person-centred care (PCC).

Keywords: health, common mental disorders, exhaustion disorder, interview, experiences, phenomenological hermeneutics, person-centred care, eHealth, randomized controlled trial.

ISBN 978-91-8009-801-4 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-91-8009-802-1 (PDF)

<http://hdl.handle.net/2077/70927>