

Clinical Trial Protocol

Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

19 Jun 2026

The efficacy of an Internet-based attention modification intervention on reducing social anxiety in student with social anxiety disorder: a clinical trial

Protocol summary

Study aim

to investigate the effect of a computer intervention on reducing attention bias to negative social stimuli

Design

Clinical trial with control group, with parallel groups, double-blind, randomized using Sealed Envelope Ltd Online Randomization Service. 2019, 60 patients.

Settings and conduct

1. Coding of computer tasks and designing website. 2. Allocation of patients in Guilan University to one of two study groups using block randomization. The participants and the assistant evaluating the outcome variables will be unaware of the group type. The location of study is the counseling center of Guilan University. 3. Measurement of outcome variables at pre- and post-assessment, and two-month follow-up and participation in 8 online sessions of Attention Bias Modification Program

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion: having social anxiety score above 30 in LSAS.
Exclusion: having any severe mental and/or organic disorders affecting on the research, and receiving psychological treatment in last 6 months or medication in last 3 months

Intervention groups

A computer intervention called Attention Bias Modification Program, which is designed to reduce attention bias to negative stimuli, will be implemented on students with clinical social anxiety. In this program, two neutral and anger facial images are repeatedly displayed on the computer screen, and the participant must quickly and accurately identify type of probe (> or <) that appear in location of neutral face. The only difference between control group and the intervention group is that because in its computer program, instead of two negative and neutral faces, only one neutral face is used, so the participant does not pay attention to the

neutral in the presence of the negative stimulus.

Main outcome variables

Social anxiety and attention bias to negative stimuli

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20210613051562N1**

Registration date: **2022-10-04, 1401/07/12**

Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2022-10-04, 1401/07/12**

Update count: **0**

Registration date

2022-10-04, 1401/07/12

Registrant information

Name

Hassan Farrahi

Name of organization / entity

Country

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Phone

+98 13 3366 6268

Email address

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Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2022-10-23, 1401/08/01

Expected recruitment end date

2023-02-19, 1401/11/30

Actual recruitment start date

empty

Actual recruitment end date

empty

Trial completion date

empty

Scientific title

The efficacy of an Internet-based attention modification intervention on reducing social anxiety in student with social anxiety disorder: a clinical trial

Public title

The efficacy of an Internet-based intervention on reducing social anxiety

Purpose

Treatment

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria**Inclusion criteria:**

The ability to read fluently in Persian Access to a computer and internet connection Having social anxiety higher than 30 on the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale

Exclusion criteria:

Having current or previous schizophrenia, schizoaffective, or bipolar disorders Having diseases that would negatively affect participation in the current study, such as epilepsy or brain damage History of stroke or neurodegenerative diseases Substance abuse and dependence in the last 6 months Current cognitive impairment Suicidal intention in the last 3 months Visual impairment affecting participation in research Receiving psychological treatment currently or in the past 6 months Receiving medication-based treatment leading to recovery now or in the last 3 months

Age

From **18 years** old to **30 years** old

Gender

Both

Phase

N/A

Groups that have been masked

- Participant
- Outcome assessor

Sample size

Target sample size: **60**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)

Randomized

Randomization description

All eligible people will be divided into intervention and control groups using the block randomization method with the size of blocks of 4 and 6. To generate randomization list, online randomization service of Sealed Envelope Ltd. 2019 will be used (<https://www.sealedenvelope.com/simple-randomiser/v1/lists>). Concealment is done through sealed opaque envelopes in a random sequence. Preparing these envelopes and determining the sequence of random allocation is done by a researcher who has no knowledge or connection with the participants. In the first in-person meeting with each participant, the researcher, who did not participate in determining the sequence of random allocation and does not know the type of participant's group, provides the participant with the previously

prepared envelope. In this way, the researcher evaluating the outcome variables as well as the participants will be unaware of the group type.

Blinding (investigator's opinion)

Double blinded

Blinding description

Participants will be unaware of their group type. Also, a researcher who divides the participants into two study groups, implements the measurement tools before starting the treatment (pre-test) and re-implements the same tools after the treatment is completed (post-test), will not know the type of the participants' group. In the explanation of the research, the participants will be told that "the present study is to be conducted in order to investigate the efficacy of a computer-based treatment for social anxiety and they will be randomly assigned to one of the two study groups, and depending on their group, they will complete one of the two computer-based programs; one of these programs is designed to treat social anxiety, but the other program is not designed to reduce social anxiety and may have a placebo effect."

Placebo

Used

Assignment

Parallel

Other design features**Secondary Ids**

empty

Ethics committees**1****Ethics committee****Name of ethics committee**

Research Ethics Committees of Guilan university of medical sciences

Street address

Education unit, Shafa hospital, 15 Khordad street

City

Rasht

Province

Guilan

Postal code

4193955599

Approval date

2022-06-29, 1401/04/08

Ethics committee reference number

IR.GUMS.REC.1401.155

Health conditions studied**1****Description of health condition studied**

Social Anxiety Disorder (social phobia)

ICD-10 code

F40.10

ICD-10 code description

Social phobia, unspecified

Primary outcomes

1

Description

attention bias

Timepoint

Before intervention, after intervention, and 2 month after intervention.

Method of measurement

Dot probe task

2

Description

Social anxiety

Timepoint

Before intervention, after intervention, and 2 month after intervention.

Method of measurement

Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale

Secondary outcomes

1

Description

Trait anxiety

Timepoint

Before intervention, after intervention, and 2 month after intervention

Method of measurement

Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory

2

Description

Depression

Timepoint

Before intervention, after intervention, and 2 month after intervention

Method of measurement

Patient Health Questionnaire-9

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention group: The intervention group consists of students diagnosed with social anxiety disorder, and the "Attention Bias Modification Program" will be implemented on them as a therapeutic intervention. To implement the Attention Bias Modification Program intervention, the probe detection task will be used, which is a modified form of the task used to measure attention bias. In this computer intervention, during 160 trials, neutral and negative face images appear equally in random order in the upper and lower parts of the screen, and then the probe mark appears in the place where the neutral image was located. Repeating this procedure enables the participant to realize that the neutral images

are predictive of the location of the probe. The rationale behind Attention Bias Modification Program is that, although participants are not told to shift their attention away from the negative and threatening image, the location of the neutral image represents the probe location on all trials, thereby facilitating participants' attention to the non-threatening stimuli.

Category

Treatment - Other

2

Description

Control group: The control group consists of students diagnosed with social anxiety disorder, and the only difference between them and the intervention group is the implementation of an intervention, which according to the research literature is not effective and acts as a placebo. The task of this group (Attention Control Condition) is similar to the task used in the intervention group, except that during the presentation of trials, only one neutral image appear, instead of two negative and neutral images in task of intervention group. Therefore, because negative and neutral facial images are not used simultaneously, participants will not learn to pay attention to neutral in the presence of negative stimuli.

Category

Placebo

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center

Counseling Center of Guilan University

Full name of responsible person

Mousa Kafie

Street address

Guilan University Complex, 5th Kilometer of Persian Golf Highway

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4199613776

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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity

Counseling Center of Guilan University

Full name of responsible person

Dr. Mousa Kafie, Head of Counseling Center

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Counseling Center, Guilan University Complex, 5th
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mosakafie@yahoo.com

Web page address

https://moshavereh.guilan.ac.ir/

Grant name

Grant code / Reference number

Is the source of funding the same sponsor organization/entity?

Yes

Title of funding source

Counseling Center of Guilan University

Proportion provided by this source

100

Public or private sector

Public

Domestic or foreign origin

Domestic

Category of foreign source of funding

empty

Country of origin

Type of organization providing the funding

Academic

Person responsible for general inquiries

Contact

Name of organization / entity

Guilan University of Medical Sciences

Full name of responsible person

Hassan Farrahi

Position

Assistant professor

Latest degree

Ph.D.

Other areas of specialty/work

Psychology

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inquiries

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Name of organization / entity

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Hassan Farrahi

Position

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Person responsible for updating data

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Sharing plan

Deidentified Individual Participant Data Set (IPD)

No - There is not a plan to make this available

Justification/reason for indecision/not sharing IPD

At the moment, we have not decided to share the data, however, if there is a request from the researchers, it will be made available.

Study Protocol

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to

make this available

Statistical Analysis Plan

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Informed Consent Form

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Analytic Code

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Data Dictionary

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available