# 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**

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Iran (Islamic Republic of)

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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/v(١ /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
**City**
Rasht
**Province**
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4199613776
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int@guilan.ac.ir

## 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
**Street address**

Counseling Center, Guilan University Complex, 5th Kilometer of Persian Golf Highway

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**Phone**
+98 13 3369 0465

**Email**
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**
Assisstant professor

**Latest degree**
Ph.D.

**Other areas of specialty/work**
Psychology

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## Person responsible for scientific inquiries

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**Position**
Assisstant professor

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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