

ONLINE PSYCHOTHERAPY AS A TOOL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT IN REHABILITATION

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Introduction. In recent years, the system of medical rehabilitation has increasingly integrated digital solutions combining medical, physical, and psychological care. One of the most promising directions of this integration is online psychotherapy – a form of remote psychological assistance delivered via video communication, mobile applications, or web-based platforms.

According to the World Health Organization (2025), telepsychological and digital mental-health services should become a core component of national mental-health systems, particularly in the field of rehabilitation [1].

The growth of telemedicine has opened access to psychological care for patients who are physically limited, geographically distant, or otherwise unable to attend in-person sessions. Meanwhile, the number of evidence-based studies confirming the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral online interventions in reducing anxiety, alleviating pain, and improving quality of life has substantially increased [2; 3].

Purpose. This study aims to summarize current scientific evidence on the role of online psychotherapy as a tool of psychological support in medical and physical rehabilitation, while identifying its main advantages, limitations, and conditions for effective implementation.

Materials and Methods. The analysis covered peer-reviewed publications from 2023 to 2025 indexed in PubMed, Scopus, Frontiers, and JAMA Network. It included randomized controlled trials, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses concerning the use of online psychotherapy in rehabilitation. Inclusion criteria comprised: presence of a control or comparison group, assessment of psycho-emotional or pain-related outcomes, and publication in an accredited scientific journal.

Results and Discussion. Recent findings demonstrate that online psychotherapy is comparable in efficacy to in-person treatment, provided that professional and ethical standards are observed.

A large randomized clinical trial by DeBar L.L. et al. (2025) found that telehealth-based CBT significantly reduced chronic pain intensity and anxiety levels within three months of treatment [2]. Similarly, a network meta-analysis

by Bobos P. et al. (2024) reported that remote CBT-based rehabilitation enhanced patients' motivation for physical exercise and improved emotional well-being [3].

According to Tajan N. et al. (2023), patients generally perceive remote therapy positively, though they emphasize the need for stable technical conditions and clear ethical guidance [4].

A meta-analysis by Shaker A.A. et al. (2023) showed no statistically significant differences between telepsychotherapy and face-to-face sessions in reducing depression and anxiety symptoms [5].

The therapeutic alliance remains a decisive factor in treatment success. Seuling P.D. et al. (2024) demonstrated that trust and emotional engagement in videoconferencing psychotherapy are comparable to in-person therapy when clinicians maintain clear session structure and nonverbal responsiveness [6].

For student and young-adult populations, online psychotherapy is a convenient means of preventing emotional exhaustion. Kimiafar K. et al. (2024) found that most respondents reported moderate satisfaction with telepsychotherapy, while about 16 % expressed high satisfaction, indicating acceptable yet improvable service quality [7].

In orthopedic rehabilitation, tele-based models have proven clinically equivalent to traditional follow-up. A randomized controlled trial by Nuevo M. et al. (2024) using the ReHub® platform after total knee arthroplasty confirmed equal effectiveness and safety compared with standard rehabilitation [8]. A systematic review by Tsang M.P. et al. (2024) further supported these results and noted potential cost reduction in remote settings [9].

Regarding ethics and data protection, WHO and OHCHR guidelines (2023–2025) stress the primacy of human rights, informed consent, and confidentiality in digital mental-health programs.

Similarly, Agurita M.P.E.S. (2025) highlights the importance of clear crisis-response protocols and secure data management within teletherapy practice [10].

Overall, current evidence confirms that distance psychotherapy reduces depressive, anxious, and pain symptoms, strengthens patient engagement in treatment, and ensures continuous psychological support throughout and after rehabilitation.

Conclusions. Online psychotherapy has proven to be an effective and accessible component of modern rehabilitation systems. Its implementation helps overcome geographic and physical barriers, improves patients' emotional states, and promotes the integration of mental and physical recovery. Sustained results depend on high-quality technical support, ethical transparency, and ongoing outcome assessment using standardized clinical scales.

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