

《Smartphone apps can help tackle anxiety, researchers find》

LONDON, May 4 (Xinhua) -- Smartphone apps can help to significantly reduce anxiety levels in those suffering from the disorder, new research from the University of Manchester revealed Thursday.

Researcher Joseph Firth from the university's Institute of Brain, Behavior and Mental Health, led the first ever meta-analysis of all published evidence on the effect of smartphone-based therapies on anxiety in nearly 2,000 people.

The study, published in the Journal of Affective Disorders, was a collaboration between the University of Manchester, Harvard University, University of Melbourne, and the Black Dog Institute in Australia.

It showed that overall, smartphone interventions reduced anxiety significantly more than control conditions, suggesting new digital therapies could be useful for managing the condition.

Smartphone apps, say the research team, may be best used for augmenting face-to-face therapy and other psychological treatment, rather than replacing standard care.

Firth said: "Smartphones could be a novel way to help treat anxiety: they are now owned by the majority of people, and are particularly popular with younger people. That presents a new opportunity for psychological care provision in a non-stigmatizing, self-managing format."

"Looking at individual studies, we find that smartphone apps which aim to promote overall mental health and well-being, rather than focusing specifically on anxiety alone, may be most consistently effective," the researcher said.

The research team is now further analyzing how smartphone apps can also be used in the treatment of depression, with the results expected to be published soon.