

# Review of: "A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Psychotherapeutic Approaches for Recurring Nightmares"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper addresses an interesting topic about the Psychotherapeutic Approaches for Recurring Nightmares. The author included 15 eligible trials comprising 1209 participants with nightmare disorder or recurrent nightmares. The conclusion gave an indication that CBT and IRT are effective psychotherapeutic approaches for treating recurring nightmares, and may be particularly useful for individuals with PTSD or other trauma-related disorders. But I think the authors require to address several major issues before publication. Please see below.

## Major comments

1. For the abstract, "The results showed that all psychotherapeutic approaches were effective in reducing the frequency and intensity of recurring nightmares, with CBT and IRT being the most effective" the author should also report the effect size.
2. The methods part should also include the detail final time of the screening. For the inclusion criteria, I suggest to add the smallest sample size. Also for the include study type, the author should make the included study types clear.
3. Whether the protocol of the present study has been registered or published? If yes, please provide the relevant information.
4. For the figure 1, the detail data of each database and records excluded should be reported. In the last part, I recommend to combine the "Studies included in review (n = 15) and Reports of included studies (n = 15)" together.
5. The included patients involved a wide range with a diagnosis of nightmare disorder or recurrent nightmares. However, we know the heterogeneity of population may contribute to the difference of effectiveness. Therefore, I recommend to perform subgroup analysis for diagnosis and other important clinical characteristics.
6. The systematic review and meta-analysis included 15 studies, the detail information of the 15 studies and reference should be reported.
7. For the Results part, the figures or tables should be present for all the results of to make them more clear. For the "Effectiveness of psychotherapeutic approaches" part, I recommend to report results of heterogeneity, this is also very important for interpretation of results. For the "Moderators of treatment effectiveness", the effect size and heterogeneity should be reported.
8. This study found "cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and imagery rehearsal therapy (IRT) were found to be the most effective modalities, with CBT being more effective than IRT in reducing the frequency of nightmares", what are the possible explanations. Please clarify in the discussion part.
9. The subgroup analysis found "studies that included individuals with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

showed a larger effect size compared to studies that did not include individuals with PTSD", what are the possible explanations and potential mechanisms. Please clarify in the discussion part.