

Peer Review

Review of: "The Potential of Conversational AI for Mental Health Support in UK Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans: A Mixed-Methods Health Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study"

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This was a well-written and very exciting study revealing a substantial treatment gap for mental health treatment in the U.K. military in the immediate post-COVID-19 period, driven mainly by logistical barriers such as limited appointment availability and long waiting times, underscoring the need for low-barrier solutions to reach underserved populations. An anonymous, accessible voicebot could help bridge this gap by complementing—rather than replacing—human clinicians, particularly for individuals deterred by access constraints, cultural expectations of resilience, or fears of career repercussions. This study is publishable, and a follow-up study with a more robust sampling methodology is still relevant, which can inform a large-scale implementation research.

The author should consider using the registry of the MOD as a sampling frame for quantitative data and use a stratified sampling procedure in the follow-up study. Similarly, the qualitative data require in-depth interviews of persons with lived experiences of those who underwent treatment or are currently on treatment to provide a deeper understanding of the context.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.