

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 systematic review and meta-analysis is quite interesting, and it is important to merge different studies in a meta-analysis. The meta-analysis seems to be well-done, but there is room for improvement, especially in regards to reporting the results.

Abstract:

The abstract is quite long, as it spans several paragraphs. A shorter, more concise abstract might be better for readers to quickly get all relevant information.

Line 49 - 50

"Specifically, CBT was more effective than IRT in reducing the frequency of nightmares large ($g=0.73$, 95% CI [0.58, 0.88], $p < 0.001$)."

What does this sentence mean? – the "large"

Introduction:

Why are those three therapeutic methods chosen, but not others?

Even if they are not included, other therapeutic methods should still be mentioned and introduced.

Lucid dreaming as an intervention method for nightmares should be included, see:

Holzinger, B., Saletu, B., & Klösch, G. (2020). Cognitions in Sleep: Lucid Dreaming as an Intervention for Nightmares in Patients With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 11:1826. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01826

Holzinger, B., Klösch, G., & Saletu, B. (2015). Studies with lucid dreaming as add-on therapy to Gestalt therapy. *Acta Neurol Scandinavica*, 131(6):355-63. Doi: 10.1111/ane.12362.

Line 99-100

"We will specifically look at how different modalities affect the frequency, distress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms that go along with nightmares."

This is not in the results!

Methods:

Line 108-111:

What is the reasoning to only include studies that compare the effectiveness of at least two of the methods? Wouldn't it be enough to compare the effect sizes of them in general?

This inclusion criteria makes the aim of the review and its general implications very unclear.

Line 103: a "." is missing

Why is the method section written in future tense?

Line 141:

"Overall, this systematic review and meta-analysis aim ..." – aims*

The formatting of the PRISMA flow diagram got messed up, so some of the text is not readable.

Also, why are there asterisk in the diagram, that do not get explained afterwards?

The included studies should be better presented. For example, how many participants each of them had, the citations for each study, etc.

Lines 196-199

"The studies used a variety of psychotherapeutic approaches, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), imagery rehearsal therapy (IRT), and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)."

Not sure what this sentence is useful for, as using these was the inclusion criteria

Line 229:

Why is the funnel plot not shown?

Also, a forest plot could show better insight into the different effect sizes from the different studies

More of the results could be better explained, maybe some tables added as well

In the abstract, line 50-51, it is stated, that the effect sizes for EMDR were smaller but still significant, however in the results section, lines 216-217 it is stated, that the pooled effect size was not significant – Which one is it?

Line 303:

Shouldn't it read "provides"? as it is a singular review/meta-analysis

