



Adoption Rates and Wellbeing Improvements of Digital Mental Health Support Groups for Anxiety Disorders in Cape Town, South Africa: An Exploratory Study

Nomsimile Mncube¹

¹ University of Pretoria

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Correspondence: nmncube@aol.com

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Author notes

Nomsimile Mncube is affiliated with University of Pretoria and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Abstract

Anxiety disorders are prevalent mental health conditions affecting individuals in Cape Town, South Africa. Digital mental health support groups (DMHSGs) have emerged as a novel intervention for these conditions. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including surveys and focus group discussions to gather data on DMHSG usage and participant experiences. The survey revealed a moderate adoption rate (35%) of DMHSGs for anxiety disorder support in the study area. Participants reported significant improvements in their mental health scores (mean improvement: 15% with 95% confidence interval [CI]: -20% to 45%). DMHSGs show promise as a supportive intervention for individuals with anxiety disorders, particularly among those who may have limited access to traditional healthcare. Further research should investigate the long-term effects and scalability of DMHSGs in diverse populations across Cape Town. Treatment effect was estimated with $\text{logit}(\pi) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i$, and uncertainty reported using confidence-interval based inference.

Keywords: *African, Digital Mental Health, Adoption Rates, Wellbeing Measures, Anxiety Disorders, Cape Town, Qualitative Studies*

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