

Synchronous Internet Therapy for Panic Disorder: How Does it Compare to  
Face-to-face Therapy?

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## Certificate of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the University or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, even though I may have received assistance from others on style, presentation and language expression.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

The current study aimed to test the efficacy of individual, synchronous Internet Therapy for panic disorder compared to traditional face-to-face therapy.

Thirty participants diagnosed with panic disorder were randomly allocated to either Internet Therapy or face-to-face therapy, and received a manualised cognitive-behavioural treatment program. When analysed separately, results indicated that face-to-face treatment significantly reduced panic symptomatology overall, however significant gains were not shown for the Internet Therapy condition. However, a direct comparison of the two active treatments failed to show significant differences, as measured by a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) on pre- and post-treatment variables. Internet Therapy did, however, significantly reduce certain symptoms of panic disorder, indicating that Internet Therapy may be useful as an adjunctive treatment to face-to-face therapy. Intention-to-treat analyses suggested that face-to-face treatment may be more effective than Internet Therapy for treating panic disorder. Additionally, there were no differences between treatment conditions in levels of working alliance, indicating that among those who stay in treatment, working alliance can be established online at a similar level to that of face-to-face therapy. However a high number of dropouts in the Internet Therapy condition warranted consideration. A thorough explanation of the results is offered in addition to recommendations for the future directions of the research and clinical implementation of Internet Therapy.