

## Designing a Waitlist Intervention for Adult Patients Awaiting Outpatient Treatment for Eating Disorders: Preliminary Findings from a Pilot Test

**Authors :** Deanne McArthur, Melinda Wall, Claire Hanlon, Dana Agnolin, Krista Davis, Melanie Dennis, Elizabeth Glidden, Anne Marie Smith, Claudette Thomson

**Abstract :** In Canada, as prevalence rates and severity of illness have increased among patients suffering from eating disorders, wait times have grown substantially. Patients in Canada often face wait times in excess of 12 months. It is known that delaying treatment for eating disorders contributes to poor patient outcomes and higher rates of symptom relapse. Improving interim services for adult patients awaiting outpatient treatment is a priority for an outpatient eating disorders clinic in Ontario, Canada. The clinical setting currently provides care for adults diagnosed with anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder. At present, the only support provided while patients are on the waitlist consists of communication with primary care providers regarding parameters for medical monitoring. The significance of this study will be to test the feasibility, acceptability and efficacy of an intervention to support adult patients awaiting outpatient eating disorder treatment for anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder. **Methods:** An intervention including psychoeducation, supportive resources, self-monitoring, and auxiliary referral will be pilot-tested with a group of patients in the summer of 2022 and detailed using a prospective cohort case study research design. The team will host patient focus groups in May 2022 to gather input informing the content of the intervention. The intervention will be pilot tested with newly-referred patients in June and July 2022. Patients who participate in the intervention will be asked to complete a survey evaluating the utility of the intervention and for suggestions, they may have for improvement. Preliminary findings describing the existing literature pertaining to waitlist interventions for patients with eating disorders, data gathered from the focus groups and early pilot testing results will be presented. Data analysis will continue throughout 2022 and early 2023 for follow-up publication and presentation in the summer of 2023. The aim of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to providing interim support to those patients waiting for treatment for eating disorders and, by extension, to improve outcomes for this population.

**Keywords :** eating disorders, waitlist management, intervention study, pilot test

**Conference Title :** ICED 2022 : International Conference on Eating Disorders

**Conference Location :** Venice, Italy

**Conference Dates :** August 16-17, 2022