

## Review Protocol

By: Federico Sarink

*As part of the studies in his doctoral program investigating the role of humor in therapy*

Leiden, 15-12-2020

This protocol is revised by Dr. José Manuel García Montes on 16.12.2020

This protocol is based on the recommendations made by the authors Liberati et. al. (2009) in their article *"The PRISMA Statement for Reporting Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses of Studies That Evaluate Health Care Interventions: Explanation and Elaboration"*.

## 1. OBJECTIVES

To examine whether humor plays a role in increasing the psychological flexibility of clients and therefore their problem solving skills in psychotherapy we will review randomized, controlled trials that assessed the effect of humor in psychotherapeutic interventions. Because we don't know how much information we can find about the role of humor in therapy, we want to keep the search as broad as possible. Of course, our aim is to find as many studies as possible that contain randomized controlled trials. But to prevent to skip information that could be relevant to our research we also want to include more type of studies as stated under point 2.5.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Inclusion criteria:

1. No restrictions are imposed on the date of publication.
2. Published, as well as unpublished, investigations will be included.
3. Articles in the English, Spanish and Dutch language will be included.
4. Participants:
  - a. Participants are at least 18 years and at most 65 years of age.
  - b. Participants can function normal cognitively. They are not cognitively impaired due to, for example, autism, dementia or an accident which led to brain damage.
5. Type of studies:
  - a. Randomized controlled trials.
  - a. Observational studies with the principal focus on humor as a therapeutic intervention.
  - b. Case studies with the principal focus on humor as a therapeutic intervention.
  - c. Cross sectional studies which contain humor at least a variable of the personality of the therapist or client.
  - d. Correlational studies that relate humor with one or more variables relevant to therapeutical interventions.
6. Type of interventions:
  - a. The focus of the investigations is on applying humor in therapy, on the influence of humor on the psychopathology of the clients and/ or their personality.
  - b. Primary we are looking at the clinical therapy setting of clients receiving some sort of psychotherapy.

- c. Secondly, we are including investigations in which clients receive therapeutical sessions in a medical treatment, in which the biomedical treatment is supported by psychological support.
  - d. Lastly, we are including investigations in which sessions are investigated in which psychologists perform coaching.
  - e. The length of the interventions investigated should be at least a minimum of three sessions (brief therapy). There's no maximum to the amount of sessions.
7. Type of outcome measures:
- a. Although in the doctoral study we're interested in the role of humor in increasing the psychological flexibility of clients and therefore their problem-solving skills, in the systematic review we are interested in any result of applying humor in psychotherapy.
  - b. Outcome measures are derived from standardized and validated scales.
  - c. Quantitative and or qualitative outcome measures are available.

### 3. INFORMATION SOURCES

1. We will be using the services of the library of the university of Almería Nicolás Salmerón of the University of Almería. At the time of writing this protocol it wasn't clear yet whether we would collaborate with the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam in writing this systematic review. If so, we will expand the search for relevant studies with the extra resources available if those resources actively add new databases. We will mention any addition in the protocol and explain why we think it was useful.
2. Via the services of the library of the university of Almería Nicolás Salmerón we selected SCOPUS and Proquest as the main databases to start our search. Those databases contain among others the following databases:
  - Psychinfo
  - Medline/ Pubmed
  - Psycarticles
  - PsycBOOKS
  - PsycTESTS

Furthermore, we will include the database Psicodoc because it contains studies in the Spanish language, and the database Narcis or an equivalent that contains more articles in the Dutch language.

3. We will be using the following search terms:

a. English

- i. Humour\*
- ii. "Funny interventions"
- iii. Therapy or Therapeutic or Psychotherapy
- iv. Personality or "Personality trait\*"
- v. Depression or "Depressive disorder\*" or "depressive episode\*" or "depressive symptom\*"
- vi. Anxiety or "Anxiety disorder" or "Symptom\* of anxiety"
- vii. "Evaluation of humour"
- viii. Treatment or "Psychological treatment" or "Therapeutic treatment"
- ix. "Psychological flexibility"
- x. "Psychological rigidity"
- xi. "Problem solving skill\*"
- xii. Creativity
- xiii. Confusion
- xiv. Resilience

b. Spanish

- i. Humor\*
- ii. "Intervenciones graciosas"
- iii. Terapia or Terapéutica or Psicoterapia
- iv. Personalidad or "Rasgo\* de la personalidad"
- v. Depresión or "trastorno\* depresivo\*" or "trastorno de depresión" or "episodio\* depresivo\*" or "síntoma\* depresivo\*"
- vi. Ansiedad or "trastorno de ansiedad"
- vii. "Evaluación de humor"
- viii. Tratamiento or "Tratamiento\* psicológico\*" or "Tratamiento\* terapéutico\*"
- ix. "Flexibilidad psicológico" or "Flexibilidad psicológico"
- x. "Rigidez psicológico" or "Rigidez psicológico"
- xi. "Habilidad de resolver problemas"
- xii. Creatividad
- xiii. Confusión
- xiv. Resiliencia

c. Dutch

- i. Humor\*
- ii. "Grappige interventies"
- iii. Therapie or Therapeutisch or Psychotherapie
- iv. Persoonlijkheid or Persoonlijkheidstrekk\*
- v. Depressie or "Depressieve stoornis\*" or "Depressieve episode\*" or "Depressieve symptomen"

- vi. Angst or Angststoornis or "Symptomen van angst" or "Symptomen van een angststoornis"
- vii. "Evaluatie van humor"
- viii. Behandeling or "Psychologische behandeling\*" or "Therapeutische behandeling"
- ix. "Psychologische flexibiliteit"
- x. "Psychologische rigiditeit"
- xi. "Probleemoplossend vermogen"
- xii. Creativiteit
- xiii. Verwarring
- xiv. Veerkracht

In SCOPUS we first search for Humour\* and get search results. Then we'll search for "Funny intervention\*", for "Therapy", etcetera and get individual search results for those keywords as well. We will do that for every keyword, also for the new keywords we might add during the search. Then we will combine the individual search results

#1 OR #2 AND #3 AND ..... in which #1 is the individual search result for Humour\*. That way we can combine all the search results for the different keywords. Humour or a synonym in the three different languages will be used in all the combined queries.

We will apply a similar search strategy when using Proquest or other data bases.

4. During the search other useful search terms could arise. We will add them to the existing list noting: "added during search process" and explain why we think that's useful.
5. We will inspect the reference sections of all retrieved studies.
6. We will contact the first authors of all identified studies to ask them for unpublished material, ongoing research and whether they knew of any other researchers having unpublished data or ongoing studies.