

Psychotherapy for Borderline Personality Disorder in Adolescents: A Systematic Review & Meta-Analysis

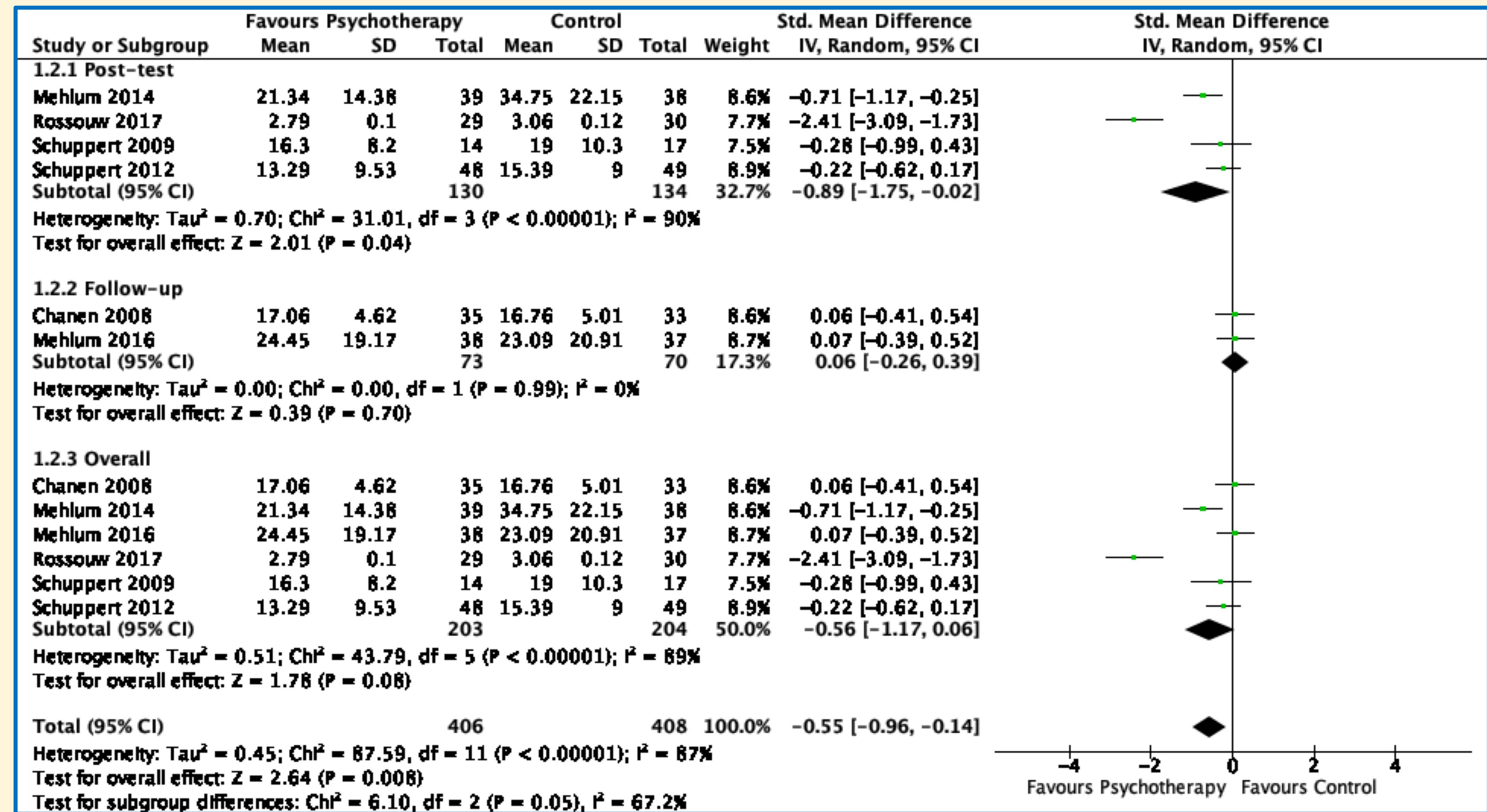
Jennifer Wong, Anees Bahji, Sarosh Khalid-Khan

INTRODUCTION

- There is growing recognition that borderline personality disorder (BPD) has its onset in adolescence and continues into adulthood.
- BPD is a debilitating condition, and adolescents with borderline symptoms have poorer outcomes at follow-up as well as predicting lower life satisfaction, decreased relationship quality, poorer social support, and lower academic and occupational attainment.
- It is unclear whether psychotherapy is effective for adolescents with BPD symptomatology.
- In this study, we conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials to assess the efficacy of psychotherapies in adolescents with BPD symptomatology.

METHODS

- Relevant randomized controlled trials were identified from a systematic search of four online databases (MEDLINE, PsycINFO, EMBASE, and the Cochrane Library).
- Data extraction and quality assessment were conducted independently by two reviewers in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines and the Cochrane Collaboration Risk of Bias tool.
- Outcomes were pooled using a random-effects model in Review Manager 5.3
- Subgroup and meta-regression analyses were conducted.
- Standardized mean differences (Hedges g) were calculated using all outcomes reported in the trials for borderline symptoms, self-harm, suicide, health service use, and general psychopathology at post-test and follow-up at the 0.05 level.



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RESULTS

- Psychotherapy had a significant and large effect on BPD symptoms at post-test ($g = -0.89$ [-1.75, -0.02], $I^2 = 90\%$), but not in follow-up ($g = 0.06$ [-0.26, 0.39], $I^2 = 0\%$) or overall ($g = -0.56$ [-1.17, 0.06], $I^2 = 89\%$).
- Similarly, psychotherapy did not have a statistically significant effect on externalizing symptoms ($g = -0.28$ [-0.69, 0.13]), internalizing symptoms ($g = 0.02$ [-0.26, 0.31]), or functioning ($g = -0.04$ [-0.26, 0.18]).

CONCLUSIONS

- There are a growing variety of psychotherapeutic interventions for adolescents with sub-syndromal and borderline personality disorder that appear feasible.
- Psychotherapies, notably dialectical behavior therapy, are effective for BPD symptoms and related problems.
- Nonetheless, effects are small, inflated by risk of bias, and particularly unstable at follow-up.
- Our results emphasize the gaps in knowledge regarding optimal treatment for adolescents with sub-syndromal BPD and BPD.