

Dear editor,

First of all, we would like to thank the reviewers for their thoughtful and constructive reviews, and for giving us the opportunity to improve the paper. We addressed the issues raised in the reviews and revised the paper accordingly. The following is a detailed response to the issues raised in the reviews.

We hope that the revised manuscript meets the expectations and standards of your editorial board and the reviewers.

Sincerely,

Stav Shapira,

on the behalf of all authors.

Reviewer #1:

Scientific Quality: Grade C (Good)

Language Quality: Grade A (Priority publishing)

Conclusion: Major revision

Specific Comments to Authors: The authors are describing a study in which psychological interventions have demonstrated efficacy on participant's level of distress and feeling of loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have the following concerns:

- 1- The title is vague: It doesn't reflect the most important findings of the study. You need to precise which intervention affected which dimension during
Response: the title was amended according to this comment and to reviewer #2 comment.
- 2- The abstract contains a lot of details and is somehow long. The idea behind an abstract is to let the reader briefly understand the study. You might be interested in shortening it.
Response: the abstract was written in accordance to the WJP author guidelines and requirements. We are willing to shorten the abstract if the editor(s) agree with this comment. Please advise further.
- 3- It would be important to describe in the introduction, more profoundly the psychological impact of the pandemic on psychological wellbeing e.g. describe all sources of anxiety (death, loss of job, being infected and infecting others, feeling alone, relational conflicts, etc.). In addition, it is important to give the reader an idea about the severity of COVID-19 outbreak in Israel during the study period. I suppose participants were all locked down but this should be clearly described in the introduction and methods.
Response: we thank the reviewer for these important comments. The relevant sections in the manuscript were edited to address these issues. See page 4 second paragraph; and page 5 first paragraph of 'materials and methods'.
- 4- The term "isolated in their homes" is not clear. Please use "confined" or "in lockdown" appropriately.
Response: the text was amended according to the reviewer's comment.

- 5- In the statistical analysis, the use of Pearson's correlation and t-student test should be exclusive to variables with a normal distribution. Was this the case? If not, please adjust by using non-parametric tests

Response: We thank the reviewer for this important comment. We agree and thus performed the relevant analysis again using Mann-Whitney U-test. The results did not change and remained insignificant. See relevant change in page 8 under 'statistical analysis'.

- 6- In table 1: Correlation matrix.... can you please insert in the horizontal axis what does the nine variables represent?

Response: Table 1 was amended according to the reviewer's comment.

- 7- In the multivariate analysis, please put the respective p values after the coefficients Beta and 95%CI

- 8- Response: Tables 2 and 3 were amended according to the reviewer's comment.

- 9- Also in the multivariate analysis, the linear regression model requires that the continuous independent variables have to be normally distributed. Was this the case?

Response: We thank the reviewer for this comment. Indeed, the assumption of normality was previously considered essential for linear regression models. However, in recent years several studies have refuted the necessity of the normality assumption in such models and argued that it is a misconception (e.g., Schmidt & Finan, 2018; Williams et al., 2013). We, therefore, believe our models to be valid and scientifically robust.

Ref:

Williams, M. N., Grajales, C. A. G., & Kurkiewicz, D. (2013). Assumptions of multiple regression: Correcting two misconceptions. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 18(1), 11.

Schmidt, A. F., & Finan, C. (2018). Linear regression and the normality assumption. *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 98, 146-151.

Reviewer #2:

Scientific Quality: Grade C (Good)

Language Quality: Grade B (Minor language polishing)

Conclusion: Accept (General priority)

Specific Comments to Authors: Please revise the manuscript as suggested on the body of the manuscript.

1. The title may be revised as suggested (replace the word techniques by interventions) Some statistical notations to be corrected as suggested

Response: title was amended according to the reviewer suggestion.

2. The aim of the study (Abstract and the Introduction) - corrected in abstract; should be consistent in the introduction

Response: the relevant sections were modified according to the reviewer's correction in abstract. Thank you.

3. Sample size is very small. This limitation should be mentioned under the section of limitations.

Response: the limitation section was modified to address the reviewer's comment.

4. The first two paragraphs of the Discussion section must be revised as suggested.

Response: the relevant paragraphs were revised as per the reviewer's suggestions.

(1) Science editor:

This invited manuscript focused on the impact of different psychological techniques on changes in self-reported distress, depression, and loneliness among older adults during COVID-19, which is an important and significant topic for clinical work. In the unique context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this research has contributed to the mental health of older people. However, this manuscript still has some defects in the experimental design and the sample size is small. In addition, the authors may need to focus on improving statistical methods. Furthermore, the writing structure needs to be further organized and the writing language needs to be further refined. The form of the table in the article should adopt the form of a three-line table.

Language Quality: Grade B (Minor language polishing)

Scientific Quality: Grade C (Good)

Response: Thank you. The manuscript was revised according to the reviewers comment, and tables were adopted to the three-line form.

(2) Company editor-in-chief:

I have reviewed the Peer-Review Report, the full text of the manuscript, and the relevant ethics documents, all of which have met the basic publishing requirements of the World Journal of Psychiatry, and the manuscript is conditionally accepted. I have sent the manuscript to the author(s) for its revision according to the Peer-Review Report, Editorial Office's comments and the Criteria for Manuscript Revision by Authors. Please provide decomposable Figures (in which all components are movable and editable), organize them into a single PowerPoint file. Please authors are required to provide standard three-line tables, that is, only the top line, bottom line, and column line are displayed, while other table lines are hidden. The contents of each cell in the table should conform to the editing specifications, and the lines of each row or column of the table should be aligned. Do not use carriage returns or spaces to replace lines or vertical lines and do not segment cell content. Please check and confirm whether the figures are original (i.e. generated de novo by the author(s) for this paper). If the picture is 'original', the author needs to add the following copyright information to the bottom right-hand side of the picture in PowerPoint (PPT): Copyright ©The Author(s) 2022.

Response: Thank you. Tables were edited to conform the journal requirements and editing specifications. We confirm that figure 1 is indeed original and generated by the authors for this paper. A ppt file with editable figure 1 is added to submission files.