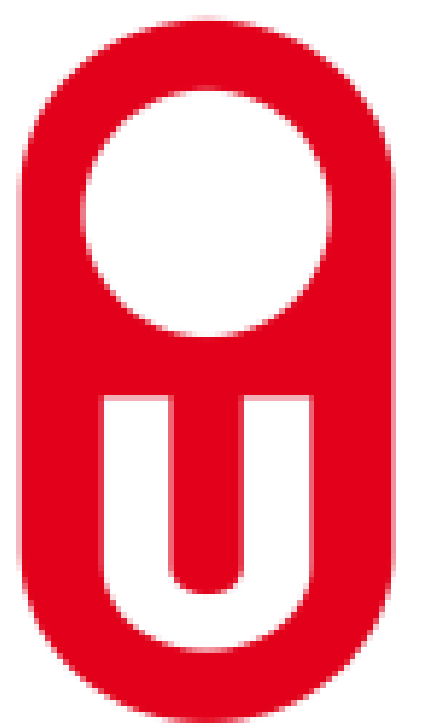


A preventive eHealth ACT module for positive aging: feasibility results

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Background

Positive aging involves maintaining an adequate level of well-being in older age, when inevitable changes and challenges are met. Psychological flexibility can help dealing with these challenges and consequently help preserve well-being [a,b]. An eHealth ACT-module was developed to foster both psychological flexibility and well-being in the general population. As part of a longitudinal effectiveness study, this current study investigates the feasibility of the eHealth ACT-module.

Method

For the current study (healthy) adults aged 40 till 75 were included from the general Dutch population. They were given access to the eHealth ACT module and were asked to answer questions afterwards regarding acceptability and usability.

The eHealth ACT-module is a stand-alone module of 9 sessions. Each session contains a short introduction of a specific ACT-skill through a video clip, followed by a metaphor and several exercises (fill-in exercises, hands-on exercises and guided experiential exercises) to practice the new skill.

ACT-sessions:

1. Introduction ACT
2. Creative Hopelessness (the struggle)
3. Acceptance (making room)
4. Defusion (taking distance)
5. Self as Context (identity)
6. Present Moment (attention)
7. Values (orientation)
8. Committed Action (investing)
9. Psychological Flexibility (bringing it all together)

Duration:

8 weeks (session 1 and 2 in first week). Approximately 30 min per session.

Accessibility:

PC, Laptop, Tablet & Smartphone. The module was made available via Embloom.



Quotes:

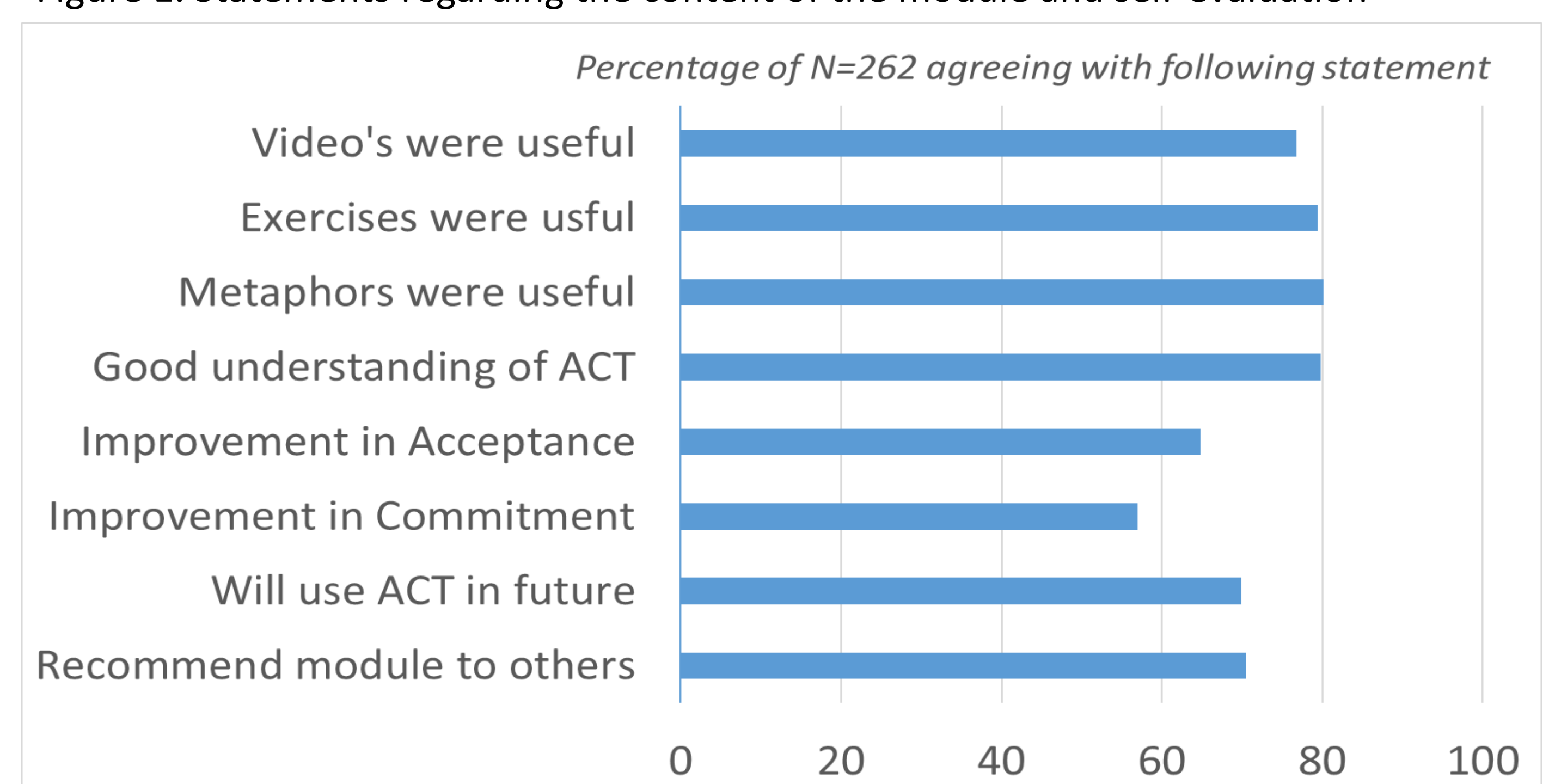
- "The module provided insight into my own possibilities"
"I gained insight into my own thoughts and that these are often not true"
"I gained insight into myself, learned what really matters to me now"
"I found some of the metaphors very expressive, they have a real impact and I use them regularly"
"I got better understanding of my own goals and setting new goals"
"I think I'm much more capable of accepting things as they are"

Results

A total of 262 participants with a mean age of 54.6 (SD=9.4) completed the feasibility questionnaire. Of these participants 76% were female and 75.6% were higher educated.

- 247 (94.3%) of the participants reported completing between 50-100% of the module
- The mean evaluation of the module was 7.4 (SD=1.13) on a ten-point rating scale
- 65.6% of the participants used a pc or laptop, 14.5% a tablet and 9.5% a smartphone
- Participants reported spending on average 3.4 hours (SD=5.9) per week on working through the module and practicing the ACT skills in daily life
- Usability data showed that participants spent on average 3:08 hours (SD=1:45h) online in one of the 9 sessions

Figure 1. Statements regarding the content of the module and self-evaluation



Strengths of the eHealth ACT-module:

- A clear and concise explanation of the ACT-components
- Meaningful, provides insight, food for thought and recognizable
- Comprehensible ACT-metaphors, eyeopeners
- Applicable ACT-exercises
- Being able to do the online training in their own time and pace

Limitations of the eHealth ACT module:

- Absence of weekly reminders
- No information available on paper
- Missing personal feedback on fill-in exercises
- Missing personal contact with a therapist
- Limited accessibility of the training (8 weeks)

Discussion

These results show that the stand-alone eHealth ACT-module has sufficient acceptability and usability, with a mean appreciation of 7.4 in the general Dutch population of 40 years and older. Future data will show if the stand-alone module will indeed increase psychological flexibility and well-being in this healthy population.

References:

- a. Reijnders, J, Simons, M, Batink, T, Janssens, M, Peeters, S., Lataster, J, Jacobs, N. (2019). Staying flexible while aging. De rol van Psychologische Flexibiliteit bij Positief Ouder worden. [Staying flexible while aging. The role of Psychological Flexibility in Positive Aging] Tijdschrift Positieve Psychologie, 3 (3), 46-54
- b. Hill, R. (2011). A Positive Aging Framework for Guiding Geropsychology Interventions. Behavior therapy, 42, 66-77. doi:10.1016/j.beth.2010.04.006