

LiveWell: Pilot Study of an Adapted Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Skills Training Protocol in Patients with Metastatic Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

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Why We Did This Study

People with advanced lung cancer are living longer because of new treatments. But many still struggle with depression, anxiety, and poor quality of life. Researchers created LiveWell - an 8-session skills program delivered by video call - to help patients cope. It is based on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), a proven method for managing emotions. This study tested whether LiveWell was easy to deliver and whether patients found it helpful and worthwhile.

Who Participated in This Study?

Thirty adults with metastatic non-small cell lung cancer took part. They were receiving cancer treatment - such as chemotherapy, targeted therapy, or immunotherapy - and had at least mild emotional distress. The average age was 62. Most were female (77%) and white (87%). They had lived with lung cancer for about



4.6 years on average. Patients were enrolled at Duke University Medical Center between May and December 2023. People with serious untreated mental illness, thinking problems, or a life expectancy under 4 months were not eligible.

What Were the Results?



LiveWell met all goals for being practical and well-received. All 30 patients enrolled in just 8 months. Most attended their sessions (93%), and 87% completed the program. Nearly all (96%) said they were satisfied. After the program, patients reported less depression and anxiety. They also got better at managing emotions, accepting illness, and tolerating uncertainty. Fatigue improved slightly. Quality of life increased. One month later, most of these gains were maintained or even stronger.

What Do These Results Mean?

These results suggest LiveWell is a promising program for people with advanced lung cancer. Patients learned coping skills that helped lower stress and improve emotional well-being. The video call format made it easier to join, even for those who live far from the hospital. These early findings are encouraging, but more research is needed. A larger study with a comparison group is the next step to confirm whether LiveWell truly helps reduce distress and improve quality of life.
