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## SMILING IS FUN: AN ONLINE INTERVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF EMOTIONAL DISORDERS

### DESCRIPTION OF THE TECHNOLOGY

*Smiling is fun* is a self-applied Internet-based program for preventing and treating emotional disorders. In addition to the more traditional approaches to preventing depression, the tool also includes novel strategies for enhancing positive moods. Thus, *Smiling is fun* combines today's most effective procedures for controlling anxiety and stress with techniques for promoting emotional regulation, coping capacity and resilience.

The aim of the program is to reduce the incidence of emotional disorders through their prevention and treatment, special attention being focused on providing early care to those with a high risk of suffering such problems. Moreover, it provides the user with instruction on adaptive ways of coping with problems and overcoming them, without the need for any previous training.

The treatment protocol consists of eight modules oriented towards teaching different psychological techniques and adaptive ways of coping with stress. In addition to the cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) components, it also includes practical exercises and strategies to enhance positive affect. Users are offered information allowing them to monitor their mood within the treatment. For this purpose, three transversal tools are used: **How am I?**, where the user can view a set of graphs showing his or her scores after completing each module (positive or negative affect, anxiety and depression); a **calendar** showing how often the system has been accessed, together with the tasks that have been done or are still pending; and an **activity diary**, which illustrates the relationship

between mood and the activities that have been completed.

The program includes the following treatment components:

- Motivation for change
- Psychoeducation
- Behavioural activation
- Cognitive therapy
- Positive psychology strategies
- Relapse prevention

*Smiling is fun* is the first program in Spanish that has undergone validation studies in a Spanish population. A controlled, randomised study has confirmed the efficacy of the treatment protocol used in *Smiling is fun* to improve patients' clinical situation. Results show that the interference arising from having experienced stressing events is significantly reduced in individuals who have followed the intervention programme compared to those in the control group. Furthermore, at one year of follow-up the improvements continue and the program is well rated and accepted by participants.

*Smiling is fun* has been developed within the framework of the European project *Online Predictive Tools for Intervention in Mental Illness (OPTIMI)* and is the result of collaborative work carried out among researchers from the Universitat Jaume I, the Universitat Politècnica de València and the Universitat de València.

### SECTORS FOR COMMERCIAL APPLICATION

- General population: people suffering from a low mood or problems of anxiety.
- Companies that wish to work on the prevention of emotional disorders among their employees.
- Hospitals and centres dedicated to caring for patients with emotional disorders.
- Clinical trials and research on clinical psychology.

### TECHNICAL ADVANTAGES AND COMMERCIAL BENEFITS

The use of the application can have beneficial effects for the patient and for public health, by helping in the prevention and treatment of emotional disorders. The figures for the prevalence of emotional disorders show that it is necessary to underline the importance of having cost-effective interventions available for sufferers of such disorders, and here self-applied Internet-based interventions are a valuable aid. The main advantages



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of the tool are:

- Self-applied Internet-based programs such as *Smiling is fun* offer powerful tools with which to improve people's access to mental health in low-resource or remote areas. Because they are capable of reaching people who live in a geographical area where there are no health centres, this type of intervention affords greater accessibility to those in need of such services.
- Being able to access the service from the patient's own home increases and ensures the levels of confidentiality while at the same time helping to reduce the stigma often attached to such cases.
- The amount of time that must be spent by the therapist is reduced and, as a result, so is the economic cost, with similar levels of effectiveness.
- It is accessible from different devices, at any time and in any place. The use of multimedia elements aids comprehension and safeguards the information.

### STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE TECHNOLOGY

Validated by empirical studies, fully developed and ready for use in computers or tablet PCs.

### INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Registered software.

### COLLABORATION SOUGHT

Licence agreement.

### RELATED IMAGES



### CONTACT DETAILS

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