Background: Cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy in combination with pharmacotherapy was shown to be superior over each treatment strategy alone. Above that, recent investigations indicate that Bibliotherapy – a guided self help manual, which uses cognitive-behavioral intervention strategies – significantly reduces both the scores of the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAMD) and of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) in depressed patients compared to controls.

Methods: The inclusion criterion for participation in the study was presence of the diagnosis partially remitted Major Depressive Disorder or Dysthymia (despite sufficient pharmacotherapy) diagnosed by the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (DSM-IV) and patient history. Diagnoses were made in consensus of two experienced psychiatrists. Patients were randomly allocated to two groups starting reading the book immediately (treatment group) or remained in observation for another 6 weeks (waiting group). Pharmacotherapy remained unchanged. Fiftysix patients (male: 17; female: 39; age: 47 yrs) have either completed the Bibliotherapy and read the German version of the self help book “Feeling good” by D. Burns or completed the 6 weeks waiting time. We tested if patients with partially remitted depression or dysthymia having received Bibliotherapy show improvements in scores of the HAMD and BDI rating scale compared to waiting group.

Results: In our preliminary results we include all patients who had completed the study (N = 56). The results show a significant reduction of HAMD (p=0.049) in the treatment group in comparison to the waiting group, but not in BDI (p=0.06).

Conclusion: This is preliminary evidence that patients show lower HAMD and BDI scores after having received Bibliotherapy. However, the impact of Bibliotherapy is to be investigated further and the number of patients has to be increased.

Acknowledgement: The authors would like to thank “Club D&A - Selbsthilfe bei Depression und Angststörung” – Self-Help-Organisation for Depression and Anxiety Disorders for cooperation. Supported by grants form the Austrian National Bank (Pr. Nr. 8500).
Bibliotherapy, reading a self-help book for the treatment of psychological problems, has been shown to be effective as a "stand-alone" treatment for depression. Many practitioners recommend self-help books as an adjunct to treatment. This article offers some guidelines for the use of bibliotherapy as an adjunct to individual psychotherapy with depressed older adults. Two clinical cases demonstrate how bibliotherapy can be used effectively in conjunction with individual psychotherapy. Authors: Mark Floyd. Related Documents: 19023697 - Effect of mind on brain activity: evidence from n