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Cathy Yang, PhD, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research

Research Seminar Series

Thursday, November 12, 2026 12PM to 1PM (Pacific Time)

Online

Changing the T1DE

A randomized controlled trial comparing acceptance and commitment therapy to supportive diabetes counseling and a waitlist control for eating disorders in type 1 diabetes

Abstract:

Eating disorders (EDs) in type 1 diabetes (T1D) are associated with elevated glycemic levels, early and severe complications and premature death. Conventional treatments for EDs, developed and tested with individuals without diabetes, are largely ineffective for individuals with T1D, suggesting the need to tailor ED interventions to the unique context of T1D and diabetes-specific barriers to recovery. This talk will present the methods and some preliminary findings for a multisite three-arm randomized controlled trial (RCT) comparing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Type 1 Diabetes Eating Disorders (ACT-T1DE) to Supportive Diabetes Counseling (SDC) and a Waitlist Control (WLC). Individuals with T1D between the ages of 16-50 years old with full or subthreshold bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder or purging disorder (primary cohort) and individuals with T1D with elevated Diabetes Eating Problems Survey-Revised scores indicating disordered eating behavior, but do not meet ED diagnostic criteria (exploratory expansion cohort) are randomized to ACT, SDC or WLC using block randomization stratified by treatment site. Treatment consists of 12 virtual or in-person sessions over 12-16 weeks with automated text message reminders between sessions. The primary outcomes are glycemic levels, ED symptoms, and diabetes self-management at end-of-treatment and 3 months post-intervention. Participants in the active treatments are expected to evidence greater improvements in glycemic parameters, ED symptoms, and diabetes management than the WLC control participants, and participants in the ACT-T1DE condition are expected to show greater improvements than SDC at follow-up. This is the first large-scale RCT testing interventions tailored to EDs in T1D. This study may provide the first empirically supported treatment options and advance knowledge of factors influencing outcomes, information critical for future treatment development and implementation.

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Our Speaker



Jason Lillis, PhD

Assistant Dean of Research, College of Psychology,
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Dr. Lillis received his B.A. in Psychology from Loyola University Maryland and his MA and PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Nevada, Reno and then completed a postdoc at Stanford University. He has worked for almost 15 years as a NIH grant-funded research scientist and faculty member at the Alpert Brown Medical School and the Miriam Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island. Dr. Lillis has more than 85 publications and 3 books and is considered a leading researcher of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, a mindfulness and acceptance-based CBT intervention, for treating chronic health conditions, such as obesity and diabetes.

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