

News Release
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BLACK DOG RESEARCHER RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL HONOUR

Britain's list of top health innovations in the last 10 years includes Computerised Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy, which features a program developed by a researcher now based at the Black Dog Institute in Sydney.

The United Kingdom Health Department compiled the list after asking England's leading healthcare experts to outline which technological innovations they believed had resulted in the biggest benefits for patients.

The Black Dog Institute researcher is Dr Judy Proudfoot.

While at the Institute of Psychiatry at Kings College in London, Dr Proudfoot and her team at the Institute of Psychiatry (Maudsley) and the UK Company Ultrasis, designed and developed a computer based cognitive behavioural therapy program known as ***Beating the Blues***.

Today, Dr Proudfoot's program is one of two computerised cognitive behaviour therapy programs endorsed by the UK Department of Health, out of a number it has evaluated. The company, Ultrasis, operates the program commercially in the United Kingdom and the United States.

The award was announced by Professor Louis Appleby CBE, the National Director for Mental Health in England and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Manchester. In 2000, the British Government commissioned Louis Appleby to lead a national program of reform in mental health.

The UK Health Department citation reads:

Computerised cognitive behavioral therapy (cCBT)

cCBT delivers cognitive behavioural therapy – proven to be clinically effective- through a computer. Providing this therapy as a first line treatment for people with anxiety and depression heralds a significant shift towards providing new services closer to people at home and in the community.

Mental health tsar Louis Appleby said, 'Depression and anxiety disorders account for an extraordinary amount of suffering in England. Over a million older people and one in six adults of working age suffer from these conditions.

'One of the most innovative approaches to treating depression and anxiety disorders is the use of therapeutic packages delivered by computer. A number of trials have demonstrated the effectiveness of computerised cognitive behavioural therapy (cCBT), now being made available

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across the country. *Fear Fighters* treats people who suffer from phobias or panic attacks and *Beating the Blues* helps people with mild to moderate depression.

'cCBT can be delivered on a personal computer, over the internet or even via the telephone and has already made an enormous difference to people living with depression and anxiety.'

Dr Proudfoot said she was extremely pleased and was looking forward to working with the Black Dog Institute team in developing their own internet based depression program, tailored specifically for Australia.

FOOTNOTE:

Another Top 10 winner was a health product given the name "Beckman Boot" after soccer superstar David Beckham. The more technical description is the Pneumatic diabetic walker. Beckman wore one to help him recover from a broken foot.

This boot deflects the pressure in the foot to prevent damage, and is used by people with diabetic sores on their feet.

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