promising results suggest light therapy may be an effective and inexpensive means for reducing and decreases in somatic aches and pains, concentration difficulties, and appetite problems. These showed significant improvements in overall depression scores as well as improved sleeping behaviors (Privitera, Moynihan, Tang, & Khan, 2010). One study investigated the effectiveness of light therapy in a sample of college students and the loan period from two weeks to one month. This poster outlines how light therapy works, our assessment results, and our approach to meeting an innovative opportunity to serve students.

**What is Light Therapy?**

Light therapy is one way to help treat Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a form of depression associated with the lack of natural light during the winter months. Signs and symptoms of SAD may include feeling depressed most of the day, losing interest in activities, having low energy, having problems with sleeping, experiencing changes in appetite or weight, and feeling sluggish. Sunlight can influence a person’s mood, energy level, and sleep. Therefore, when there are changes in the amount of light from changes in the season or a rainy day, there may also be changes in how a person feels. Whether diagnosed with SAD or what would be considered the winter blues, light therapy can be a positive approach for many people in dealing with these types of symptoms.

There are different forms of light therapy, which can create confusion, but the light therapy described here is from a light box that produces an extremely bright, non-UV light (10,000 lux) that enters through the eyes. During light therapy, a person sits near a light box that gives off bright light that mimics natural outdoor light. This process is thought to affect brain chemicals, like serotonin and melatonin, linked to mood and sleep. The light box is about the size of an iPad and should be positioned at an angle toward the eyes when using. For best results, it is recommended to use for 30 to 60 minutes a day and on a consistent basis for a period of time. It can be a passive activity and users can still engage in other activities while using the light box like reading, eating breakfast, or working on a computer.

Light Therapy is one tool in addressing student mental health needs (Cotterall, 2010; Krzan, Van de Werken, Gordijn, & Meesters, 2014). It is an attractive option because the risks associated with light therapy are minimal and it does not require a prescription or medication. Research on the efficacy of light therapy supports its capacity to treat depression symptoms such as SAD (Privitera, Moynihan, Tang, & Khan, 2015). One study investigated the effectiveness of light therapy in a sample of college students who suffer from depression (House & Walton, 2018). The study examined changes in overall depression scores and assessed changes in sleep, appetite, pain, and concentration levels. Results showed significant improvements in overall depression scores as well as improved sleeping behaviors and decreases in somatic aches and pains, concentration difficulties, and appetite problems. These promising results suggest light therapy may be an effective and inexpensive means for reducing symptoms of young adult depression.

**Methods**

A paired T-test was applied to test for statistical significance (n=88) on all paired samples and the total change. Across all measures, there was a significant decrease in negative feelings. There was a significant average difference between the pre and post-test (t(87) = 3.515, p < 0.001). On average, post-test scores were 5.6 points lower, or one tier lower, than pre-test scores (95% CI [4.2, 6.9]). There is strong evidence that light therapy interventions increases depression levels.

**Results**

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems (0=not at all, 1=several days, 2=more than half the days, 3=nearly every day)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little interest or pleasure in doing things**</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless***</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling tired or having little energy***</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor appetite or overeating</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling bad about yourself****</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble concentration on things***</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed****</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall sum of scores***</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How did you hear about this program?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Word of Mouth</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How effective did you find light therapy?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slight improvement</th>
<th>Moderate improvement</th>
<th>Significant improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reference**


