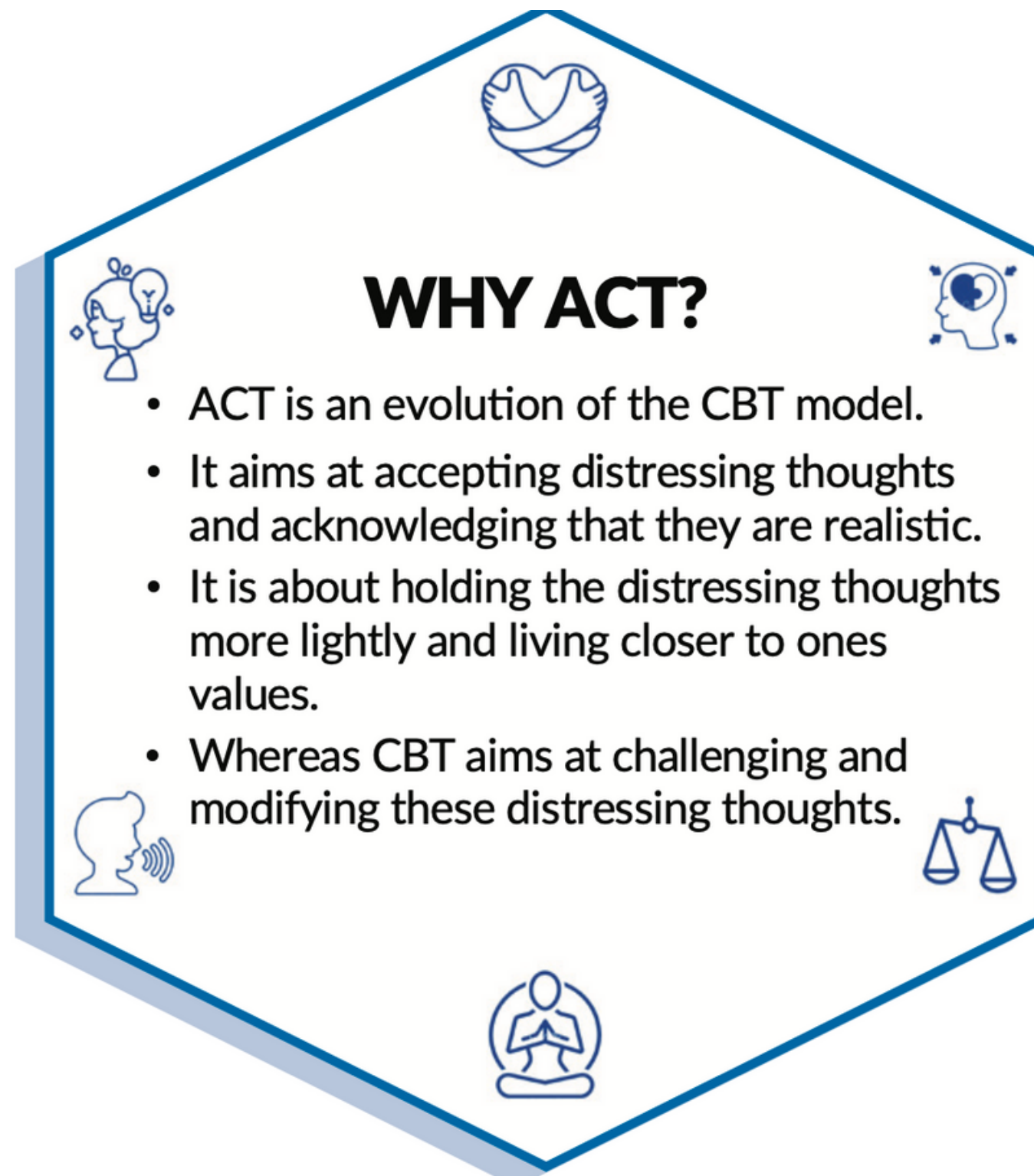


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Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for people with palliative care needs, their caregivers and staff involved in their care: A systematic scoping review.

- People affected by advanced progressive illness often experience anxiety, depression, and existential distress.
- There is evidence that ACT can help people with a range of problems.
- Evidence in palliative care settings is emerging.
- We aimed to explore evidence for ACT for people with an advanced progressive illness and their carers.



Objective

To synthesize the evidence for Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for people with palliative care needs, their informal caregivers, and staff involved in their care.

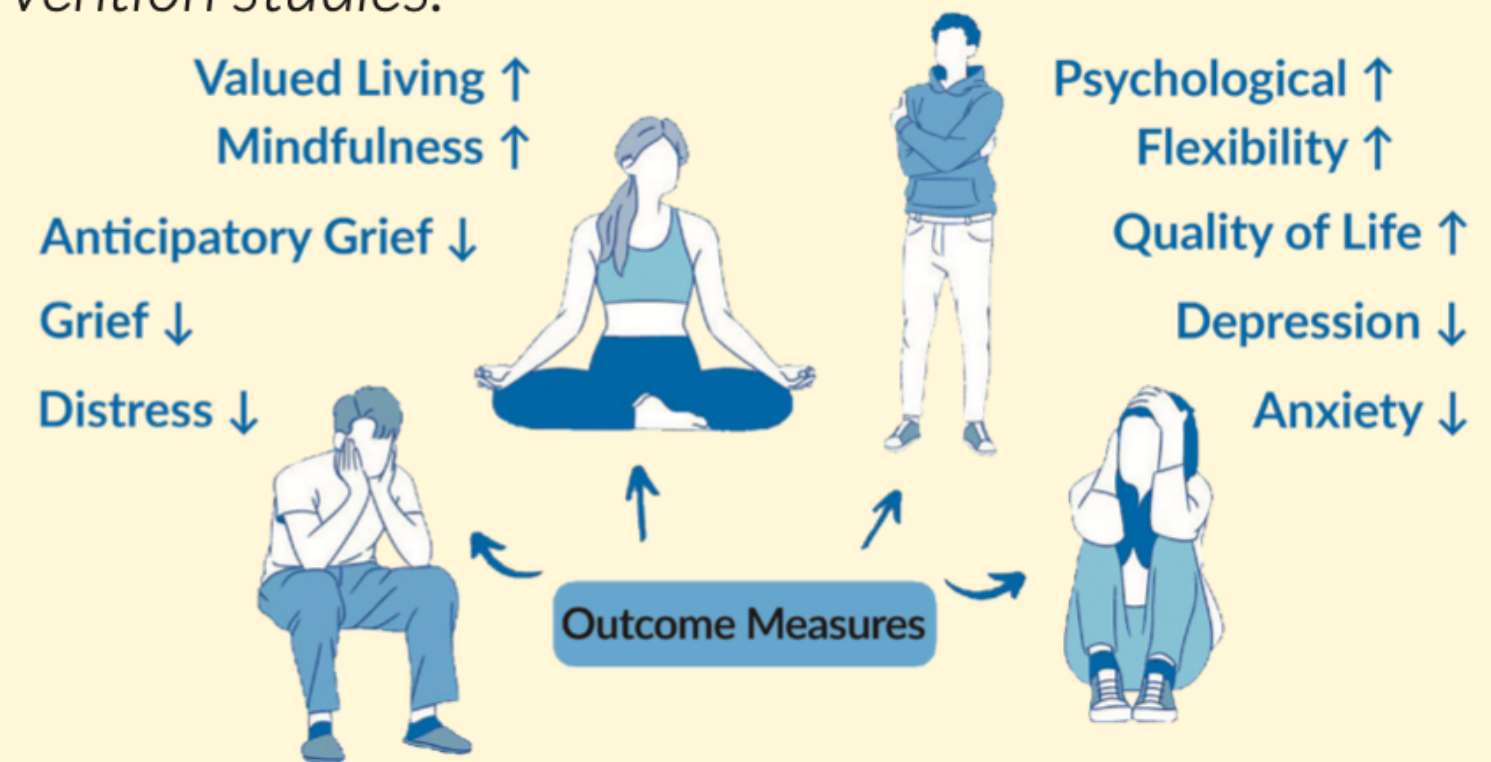
Method

A systematic scoping review was undertaken using four databases (Medline, PsychInfo, Embase and Amed), with relevant MeSH terms and key words from January 1999 to February 2022. Three research registries were also searched.

Results

- 26 papers (15 intervention and 11 observational studies) were included set
 - Advanced progressive illness (n=15)
 - Informal caregivers (n=4)
 - Staff (n=3)
 - Bereaved (n=4)
- ACT is acceptable to patients and caregivers in palliative care settings.
- There is preliminary evidence for the positive impacts of ACT on anxiety, depression, distress, pain and sleep interference (see Figure 1).
- The majority of the interventions were delivered in the community settings such as the home (n=6/15) and were delivered by a mental health specialist such as a clinical psychologist (n=7).
- Observational studies (n=11) revealed a positive relationship between acceptance and adjustment to loss, physical function, low levels of stress and burnout and increased valued living.

Figure 1: Psychological outcome measures and results from intervention studies.



Conclusion

ACT is acceptable to patients and caregivers in palliative care settings, and generally feasible to evaluate. There is preliminary evidence that ACT may improve anxiety, depression, sleep, physical symptoms and quality of life for people with advanced progressive illness; and is beneficial for informal caregivers and professionals.

Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness studies are now needed to strengthen the evidence base.

