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The nurse telephone call is a powerful tool for depression and possibly post-partum depression

In this cohort study¹ nurse-midwives were given 16 hours training in interpersonal psychotherapy which was then delivered by telephone to women with post-partum depression.

The study reported that those who got the phone option versus those referred to a mental health service did better on depression outcomes than the referred group, but there were significant methodological flaws in the design.

Of interest was that 100% of women got at least 1 phone call and on average participated in 6.22 calls while only 50% turned up to the referral service and on average got 2.85 sessions. Clearly, the telephone improves access and possibly outcomes.

An older study² found that patients randomised to a weekly nurse phone call (lasting on average 5.6 minutes and all patients were on antidepressants) brought about an improvement at six weeks and six months with an NNT of 5 (better than antidepressants for mild or moderate depression³).

References:

1. Telephone-Administered Interpersonal Psychotherapy by Nurse-Midwives for Postpartum Depression (2016) [Click here](#)
2. Efficacy of Nurse Telehealth Care and Peer Support in Augmenting Treatment of Depression in Primary Care (2000) [Click here](#)
3. Antidepressant Drug Effects and Depression Severity (2010) [Click here](#)

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