

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TELECOUNSELLING IN DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS IN ELDERLY IN A PROJECT OF TELE-HOME-CARE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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## Aim:

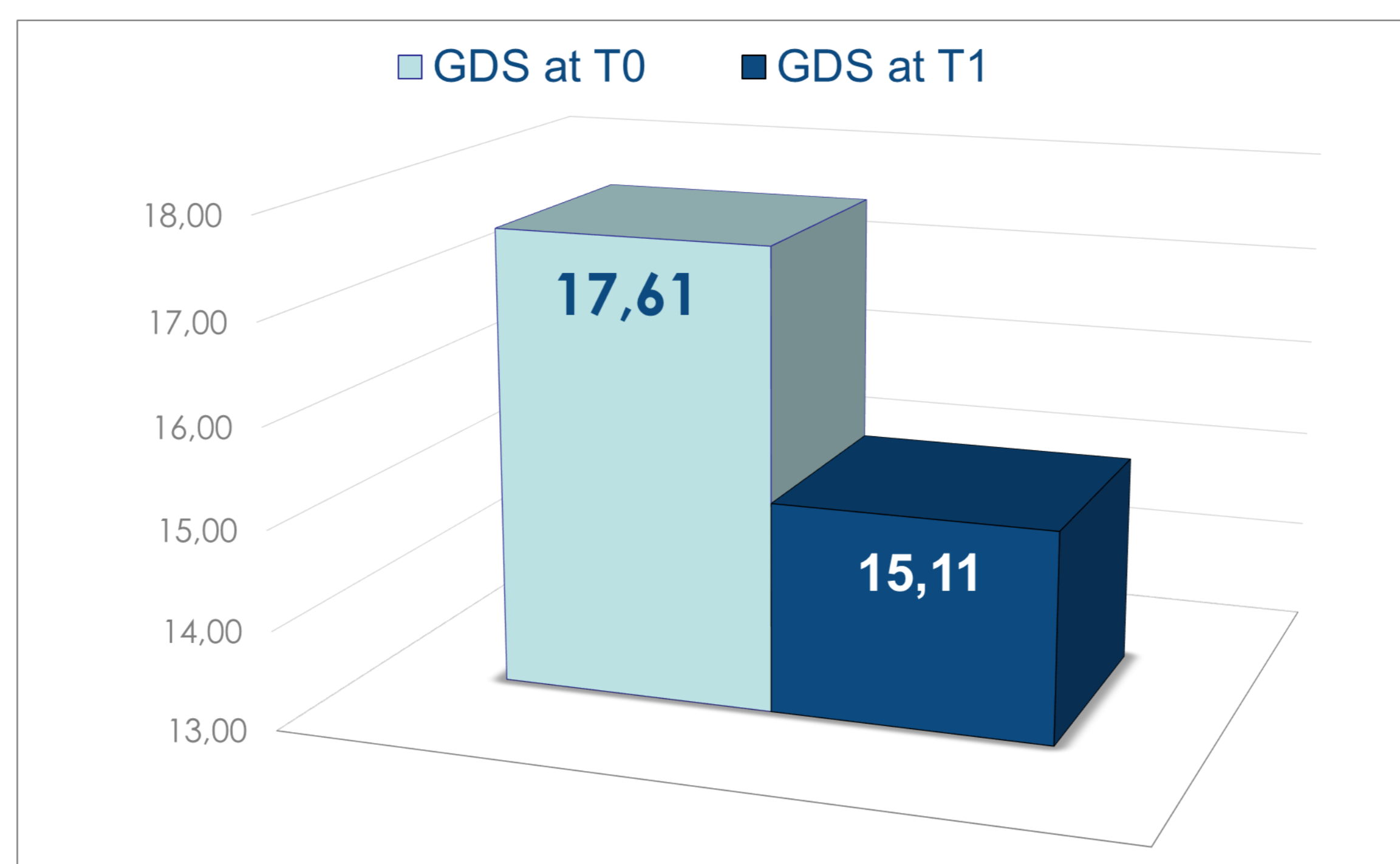
The use of telemedicine for home care in elderly represents the new frontier of Healthcare, thanks to its social-economical benefits. This study aims at assessing the effectiveness of psychological telecounselling in improving depressive symptoms and quality of life in a geriatric sample living in their own homes.

## Materials and method:

18 subjects (5M-13W; mean age 77 years) were selected among the patients followed by the telemedicine service managed by the **IRCSS Centro Neurolesi "Bonino Pulejo"** (Messina) in collaboration with the Municipality of Catania. The subjects' global cognitive level and the depressive symptomatology were assessed respectively by means of the Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE) and the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS), at the beginning (T0) and at the end (T1) of the treatment. All the patients underwent 26 half an hour training sessions (i.e. one session for week for 6 months).

## Graph

### GDS at T0 and GDS at T1



## Results:

At the end of the training, most of the patients (i.e. 15 out of 18) showed a reduction in the depressive symptomatology (**GDS at T0=17,61; GDS at T1=15,11**) (\*Graph). In particular, mood better improved in older patients and in males. All the patients requested to continue the telecounselling.

## Discussion and Conclusions:

Our data confirm previous findings on the efficacy of psychological tele counselling, especially in the elderly. The improvement in depression and quality of life related to this tool may reduce patient hospitalization and healthcare costs. However, further larger sample studies with a control group are needed to confirm this positive findings.

## REFERENCES

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