

Anorexia nervosa is a severe psychiatric eating disorder with high morbidity and mortality rates, being the deadliest among psychiatric conditions. Treatment for anorexia is complex, but research has developed specialist supportive clinical management (SSCM), the MANTRA model (Mosley Anorexia Nervosa Treatment for Adults), and enhanced cognitive behavioral therapy (CBTE) as potential interventions.

The SWAN study was a significant randomized controlled trial that compared these three psychological treatments for anorexia nervosa among 120 adults across three Australian sites. Participants underwent up to 40 therapy sessions over about a year. All three treatments demonstrated significant improvements in body weight and eating disorder psychopathology, with the improvements maintained at 12-month follow-ups. About 50% of participants showed good outcomes regarding healthy weight and reduced eating disorder symptoms by the end of treatment.

Although the recovery rates based on strict criteria were lower (around 25%), the overall findings indicate that these treatments yielded meaningful benefits for participants. Future research is essential to explore treatment efficacy further and determine which treatment may be best suited for different individuals, as only about half of the patients showed significant improvements and many faced challenges in completing treatment. The study highlighted the urgent need for continued research in this difficult-to-treat condition to further improve outcomes for patients and their families.