APPS FOR MOOD AND ANXIETY DISORDERS: EXPLORATION AND EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

MEERSMAN, M. & VAN DAELE, T.
THOMAS MORE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, ANTWERP

ASSOCIATIE KU LEUVEN

THOMAS MORE

BACKGROUND

- Apps are making a gradual entrance in mental healthcare.
- The amount of applications is vast, but the number of applications that have been put to the test are limited.
- The goal of this bachelor thesis was therefore to explore
    - which applications in Dutch are available for anxiety and mood disorders and
    - to what extent they are of sufficient quality for use in clinical practice.

METHOD

- A comprehensive search in Apple's App Store revealed 33 relevant apps.
- Six apps met the threshold (four out of six predetermined criteria) for inclusion,
- Each was evaluated using three additional quality criteria based on the Onlinehulpstempel (Trimbos, 2015), requiring the app
    1. to focus on active user participation,
    2. to be based on a protocol and
    3. to be aimed at change.
- An overall score on a total of nine was subsequently calculated.

RESULTS

Table 1

Overview of apps and scores on criteria

Apps	Inclusion criteria						Quality criteria			Total
	A&M	Dutch	SA	ψ	Curative	Free	Active	Protocol	Change	
Therappi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
Robbin	.5	1	1	1	.5	1	1	0	1	7
How are you?	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	7
Hyperventilatie	1	1	1	1	.5	.5	.5	.5	1	7
In-Balanz	1	1	1	.5	.5	.5	1	.5	1	7
Maniecheck	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	6

Note. A&M = anxiety & mood disorders, SA: stand-alone, no help from professional required, ψ = psychological component, 0 - .5 - 1 = = not, partially or fully meeting criterium

DISCUSSION

- Finding relevant apps appears for anxiety and mood disorders = daunting task.

- Therappi met all criteria, five other apps obtained acceptable scores.

- Current search was exploratory: limited to Apple's App Store & only for free apps.
    - Does however reflect every day reality for most clients.

- Mandatory conformity marking as a solution?
    - Currently rarely applied in mental healthcare.

- Making users more app literate as a different, more suitable approach?
    - Tool developed by Patientview (2015)
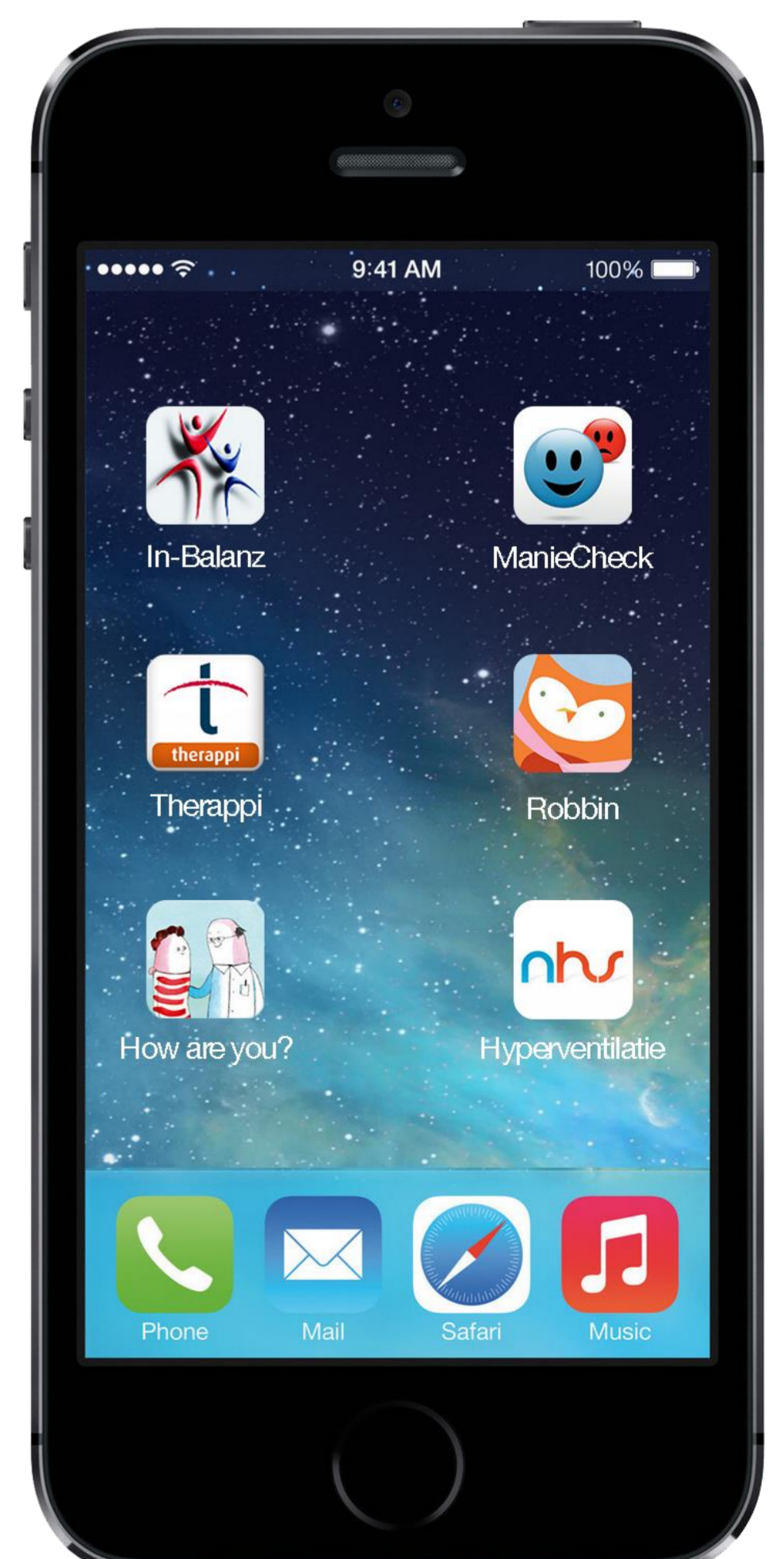
REFERENCES

- Patientview (2015). Health apps towards a balanced life. A toolkit to help you. Retrieved 19 March 2015 from http://www.blastphotography.co.uk/patientview.html
- Trimbos (2015). Onlinehulpstempel. Retrieved 19 March 2015 from onlinehulpstempel.nl