

THE LANCET

Psychiatry

Message from the Editor:

Welcome to another *Lancet Psychiatry* newsletter.

I popped into a meeting at the Alan Turing Institute towards the end of last week, all about "[FinHealthTech](#)". For those of us old enough to need such things spelled out (myself included), this means "finance, health, and technology". Anyone involved in mental health research and care will have experienced the chronic underfunding of the sector—so it is something of a surprise to find financial institutions and new financial services startups are now expressing an interest in mental health. Should we be pleased, or worried?

As far as I could glean, there are several reasons for this interest. The first is, reassuringly, the voice of people with first-hand knowledge of mental health problems. Bailey Kursar, the CEO of [new startup Toucan](#), spoke about how [her own experiences](#) with mental ill health and the [financial pressures](#) attendant on it had led her to develop a service helping people to manage money stresses. Second, there is self-interest. Financial service providers such as credit card companies are keen to keep the economy moving: put bluntly, bankruptcy does not help them. They also want to make sure their own staff are supported with their mental health. Third, there is pressure from clinicians: for example, those in addiction services who are demanding new ways to help clients who have problems with gambling.

Fourth—this is the tricky one. Credit companies have access to a vast amount of data, which, as one speaker pointed out, is rather better curated and joined-up than health data. What could they do with this? What *should* they do with it? The use of financial data in helping individuals to manage long-term mental health conditions has potential, but also numerous perils, both practical and, more important, ethical. The issues involved are discussed at greater length in a [Comment in *The Lancet Digital Health*](#). Have a read and see what you think: I'll be watching developments with interest.

All the best, as ever—



Niall Boyce Editor, *The Lancet Psychiatry*

Additional links about the *FinHealthTech Consortium*:

<https://www.beckyinkster.com/fhtc>

<https://www.beckyinkster.com/fht-dec-event-summary-notes>