Delivering Parent-Teen Therapy for ADHD through Videoconferencing: A Preliminary Investigation

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Abstract

Adolescents with ADHD demonstrate notoriously poor treatment utilisation. Barriers to access have been partially addressed through tailored therapy content and therapist delivery style; yet, additional challenges to engaging this population remain. To leverage modern technology in support of this aim, the current study investigates parent-teen therapy for ADHD delivered over a video conferencing format. In this preliminary feasibility study, teens and parents (N = 20) received an empirically supported dyadic therapy that incorporates skills-based modules with motivational interviewing. The video conferencing interface was deemed feasible with nearly all families completing treatment. The acceptable therapeutic alliance was reported and key mechanisms of change were engaged (i.e., adolescent motivation to meet goals, parent strategy implementation). Families reported high satisfaction, despite minor disturbances associated with delivering therapy via videoconferencing. Treatment integrity and fidelity were acceptable, though slightly reduced compared to clinic-based trials of the same protocol. Therapists perceived that video conferencing enhanced treatment for 50% of families. Reductions in participant ADHD symptoms and organisation, time management, and planning problems from baseline to post-treatment were noted by parents and teachers. However, open trial results of this study should be interpreted with caution due to their uncontrolled and preliminary nature.