Cogmed Working Memory Training Presents Unique Implementation Challenges in Adults With ADHD

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Abstract

Cogmed Working Memory Training (CWMT), an online cognitive training program developed for children, is an increasingly popular non-pharmacological intervention for ADHD amongst all ages, despite limited supporting evidence. The initial objective of the present work was to examine the short- and long-term impacts of CWMT on brain function in adults with ADHD. However, during the conduct of our study, we experienced multiple levels of failures in recruitment and retention that signaled potential concerns about the suitability of CWMT for adults with ADHD. This perspective piece aims to describe the difficulties we encountered in the context of studies examining the efficacy of CWMT in comparable populations. We trace these difficulties to the limited tolerability of the current CWMT structure for adults with ADHD, and review similar limitations in the literature. We suggest that efficacy of CWMT in children may be due in large part to close monitoring and scaffolding provided by clinicians and caregivers. For CWMT to have viability for widespread use in adults, greater support and structure will be needed for users to improve the likelihood of adherence. We discuss implications and considerations for future efforts in both research and clinical practice.