



Online CBT is ineffective for treating adolescent anxiety

By Jessica K. Edwards

Researchers in Reading, UK have assessed whether self-completed, therapist-supported online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for adolescent anxiety disorders is an effective treatment approach. Data obtained from 60 adolescents showed that there is no difference in patient outcomes between those receiving the “BRAVE for Teenagers-ONLINE” treatment¹ and waitlist controls. There was also no improvement in outcomes when parents also received online sessions. While this data needs to be replicated in future studies, these findings suggest that this online CBT treatment, with or without parent sessions, is ineffective at treating anxiety disorders. Although the treatment uptake by adolescents with anxiety is low, and waiting times for treatment are often high,^{2,3} the researchers propose that routine use of this online therapy by clinical services to help overcome anxiety issues is premature.

Referring to:

Waite, P., Marshall, T. & Creswell C. (2019), A randomized trial of internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy for adolescent anxiety disorders in a routine clinical care setting with and without parent sessions. *Child Adolesc. Ment. Health*. 24: 242-250. doi: 10.1111/camh.12311.

See also:

<https://www.brave-online.com/>

References:

¹Spence, S.H. et al. (2006), BRAVE for Teenagers-ONLINE: An Internet based program for adolescents with anxiety. Brisbane, Australia: University of Queensland.

²Merikangas, K.R. et al. (2011), Service utilization for lifetime mental disorders in U.S. adolescents: Results of the National Comorbidity Survey-Adolescent supplement (NSC-A). *J. Am. Acad. Child Adolesc. Psychiatry* 50: 32-45. doi: 10.1016/j.jaac.2010.10.006.

³Frith, E. (2016), CentreForum Commission on Children and young people’s mental health: State of the nation. Centreforum. Available from: <http://centreforum.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/State-of-the-Nation-report-web.pdf>.

Glossary:

Cognitive-behavioural therapy: a form of talking therapy that encourages patients to manage their psycho-social problems by changing the way they think and behave; CBT focuses on current problems and finds practical ways to improve state-of-mind on a day-by-day basis.