

Telehealth Psychotherapy: A Comparison of Two Swedish Randomized Clinical Trials

Authors : Madeline Foster

Abstract : Since the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth usage for the delivery of psychotherapy has surged. The evidence base evaluating the success of telehealth interventions continues to grow, with both benefits as well as potential risks identified. This study compared two recent randomized clinical trials (RCTs) from Sweden that looked at the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) delivered via telehealth (TH) versus face-to-face (FTF) for individuals with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). The papers had mixed results. The first paper by Aspvall and colleagues compared the effect of a therapist-supported, internet-delivered stepped-care CBT program for children and adolescents aged 7 to 17 with face-to-face CBT (2021). In Aspvall's study, the control scored a mean Y-BOCS of 10.57 and the TH intervention group scored a mean Y-BOCS of 11.57. The mean difference (0.91) met the criteria for noninferiority ($p = 0.03$). The second study by Lundström and colleagues also compared therapist-supported, internet-based CBT with FTF CBT for the treatment of those with DSM-5-diagnosed OCD. Conversely, while Lundström's study reported improved symptoms across all groups, at follow up the difference in symptom severity between FTF and TH was clinically significant, with 77% of FTF participants responding to treatment compared to only 45% of TH participants. Due to the methodological limitations of Lundström's study, it was concluded that Aspvall's paper made a stronger scientific argument.

Keywords : telehealth, Sweden, RCT, cognitive-behavioral therapy, obsessive-compulsive disorder

Conference Title : ICTADH 2022 : International Conference on Telemedicine and Digital Health

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : December 09-10, 2022