Evaluating the Efficacy of Internet-Delivered Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Blended With Synchronous Chat Sessions to Treat Adolescent Depression: Randomized Controlled Trial

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## Authors

Topooco N.;Byléhn S.;Dahlström Nysäter E.;Holmlund J.;Lindegaard J.;Johansson S.;Åberg L.;Bergman Nordgren L.;Zetterqvist M.;Andersson G.

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## Sample

Adolescents 15 to 19 years of age were recruited through a community setting at the national level in Sweden (n=70) and allocated to either 8 weeks of treatment or to minimal attention control.

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

Background: Depression is a common and serious problem among adolescents, but few seek or have access to therapy. Internet-delivered cognitive behavioral therapies (ICBTs), developed to increase treatment access, show promise in reducing depression. The inclusion of coach support in treatment is desired and may be needed.

Objective: The aim of this study was to determine the efficacy of an ICBT protocol blended with weekly real-time therapist sessions via chat; blended treatment, for adolescent depression, including major depressive episode (MDE). The protocol has previously been evaluated in a controlled study.

Methods: In a two-arm randomized controlled trial, adolescents 15 to 19 years of age were recruited through a community setting at the national level in Sweden (n=70) and allocated to either 8 weeks of treatment or to minimal attention control. Depression was assessed at baseline, at posttreatment, and at 12 months following treatment (in the intervention group). The primary outcome was self-reported depression level as measured with the Beck Depression Inventory II at posttreatment. The intervention was offered without the need for parental consent.

Results: Over two weeks, 162 adolescents registered and completed the baseline screening. Eligible participants (n=70) were on average 17.5 years of age (SD 1.15), female (96%, 67/70), suffered from MDE (76%, 53/70), had no previous treatment experience (64%, 45/70), and reported guardian(s) to be aware about their depression state (71%, 50/70). The average intervention completion was 74% (11.8 of 16 modules and sessions). Following the treatment, ICBT participants demonstrated a significant decrease in depression symptoms compared with controls (P