

## Access early intervention: an eHealth solution to childhood behavioural disorders

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In Australia, only one in four children with behavioural and emotional problems access evidence-based interventions (Sawyer et al., 2000). In rural areas, access rates are even lower, and mental health services are simply not available. Treatment in the city can involve significant travel and time away from home, and services can only be brief and intense. The current project involves the development and preliminary evaluation of one of Australia's first online treatments for parents of children with behavioural disorders. Run within the University of New South Wales, participants reside outside the Sydney catchment area in regional and rural New South Wales. Parents of children with conduct problems received either in-person parent training or parent training via an e-health platform. The Access Early Intervention program requires families to watch video modules, before connecting with a psychologist through videoconference each week. While previous research on e-health programs have examined outcomes, this is the first study to address if this alternative mode of delivering therapeutic services is acceptable to clients. The study compares processes and outcomes associated with in-person treatment-as-usual versus the e-health treatment. Specifically, it compares parents' and therapists' engagement, acceptability, satisfaction, and attitude towards the two treatment modalities, as well as, the therapeutic alliance formed, changes in parenting knowledge and confidence, and finally, improvements in child behaviour problems. Data will be presented on the first 40 families who have completed treatment, including follow up assessment. Results provide preliminary support for satisfaction, engagement and acceptability of the Access Early Intervention program. This project takes the first steps in making a well-established and evidence-based treatment available to thousands of rural families who currently have no access to help, and allows for in-depth analysis of the client experience.