

USING COMPUTER GAMES TO SUPPORT ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS: LESSONS FROM A DEPLOYMENT STUDY

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METHODS

Pesky gNATs has been made available to therapists through a not-for-profit organisation. After one year, we collected data from therapists who have used the game, using an online survey and follow-up semi-structured interviews. The data collection addressed the expectations and experiences of both therapists and young people and also sought opinions on key themes including the flexibility of the technology and attitudes towards user-generated versus automated adaptations in future versions. We used thematic analysis to identify key themes in the data.

RESULTS / DISCUSSION

21 therapists completed the online survey and five therapists participated in the follow-up interview. Confirming previous assessments, data suggests that the game can be helpful in delivering therapy and that the young people generally liked the approach. However, therapists shared diverse opinions regarding the young people for whom they deem the game appropriate. Three themes were identified: 1) stages of use; 2) impact on the delivery of therapy; 3) further developments. We discuss therapists' reflections on the game regarding their work practices and consider the question of customisation, including the delicate balance of adaptable interaction versus the need for fidelity to a therapeutic model.

CONCLUSION

This research provides further evidence that therapeutic games can be helpful in the delivery of therapy. However, therapists' autonomy and decisions on when, with who and how to use technology varies strongly. This needs to be considered when designing technologies. This work has been submitted to JMIR Mental Health



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