

Telemedicine for depression in primary care Adult Mental Health

Literature review updated December 2016.

As part of WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#). At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

Program Description: We reviewed studies of the effectiveness of telemedicine for the treatment of depression in primary care settings. Our analysis included studies that evaluated outcomes for individuals randomly assigned to telemedicine for behavioral health or usual care, which typically included in-person psychiatric treatment. Subjects in reviewed studies received behavioral health services through a remote link while present in a clinical setting, which does not include home-based communication.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect size and standard error			Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
			ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Major depressive disorder	3	153	-0.444	0.159	43	-0.460	0.005

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

- Moreno, F.A., Chong, J., Dumbauld, J., Humke, M., & Byreddy, S. (2012). Use of standard Webcam and internet equipment for telepsychiatry treatment of depression among underserved Hispanics. *Psychiatric Services*, 63(12), 1213-1217.
- Nelson, E.L., Barnard, M., & Cain, S. (2003). Treating childhood depression over videoconferencing. *Telemedicine Journal and E-Health*, 9(1), 49-55.
- Ruskin, P.E., Silver-Aylaian, M., Kling, M.A., Reed, S.A., Bradham, D.D., Hebel, J.R., . . . Hauser, P. (2004). Treatment outcomes in depression: comparison of remote treatment through telepsychiatry to in-person treatment. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 161(8), 1471-1476.

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