

Connecting Rural Children to Therapy Supports

A Trial of Telepractice for Allied Health Service Provision

What is it about?

Using the internet to deliver allied health services via videoconferencing has the potential to give people living in rural and remote areas more choice and access to allied health services such as speech pathology and occupational therapy. Currently, however there is little information about whether these services are effective, or how therapists should deliver telepractice services so that they best suit children and their families.

In this research, we will look at whether speech pathology and occupational therapy services delivered using videoconferencing are effective for helping children achieve therapy goals, and whether they are feasible, and acceptable to parents and therapists. This research has been approved by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

Who can participate?

We are looking for children and their parents/legal guardians who are about to start receiving speech pathology and/or occupational therapy services via videoconferencing. Children must be aged 0-12 years of age, be eligible for Individual Funded Packages under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and live in a rural or remote community in Australia.

What will I have to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask your permission for your child's therapist to provide us with clinical information about your child, including their therapy goals, and their assessment results immediately before and immediately after the therapy episode. We will also ask them to provide us with some basic demographic information, such as your child's sex, date of birth, whether they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and the town/suburb where you live.

We will also ask you to complete a short survey, and invite you to talk with a researcher about what you thought about your child's telepractice services.

Who can I contact?

If you are interested in participating in this research, or if you would like more information, please contact your child's therapist, or Dr Monique Hines at the University of Sydney.

Email: monique.hines@sydney.edu.au

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