Exploring Telehealth Delivery of Early Intervention Services: A review of the literature.

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A comprehensive search of the literature was conducted from January 2000 through October 2020. Searches were performed in MEDLINE (Ovid), CINAHL, PsycINFO, Cochrane CENTRAL, and Web of Science. A combination of controlled vocabulary and text words were used to represent the concepts of Early Intervention, Telehealth, and Children. All results were exported to Endnote and duplicates were removed.

1638 abstracts were screened by two independent reviewers and a third reviewer made final inclusion decisions with regards to any conflicts. “Raysys – a web and mobile app for systematic review” (2016) was utilized to upload all articles and allow reviewers to independently record their inclusion decisions. Inclusion and exclusion criteria as stated below.

PRISMA Flow Diagram

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria Applied

1188 Non Duplicate Citations Screened

361 Articles Retrieved

1275 Articles Excluded After Title/Abstract Screen

0 Articles Excluded After Full Text Review

176 Articles Excluded During Data Extraction

Level 1 - Experimental Comparison Designs

Level 2 - Quasi-Experimental Designs

Level 3 - Observational Analytic

Level 4 - Descriptive

Qualitative

Next Steps

The included articles will be assessed using the Joanna Briggs Institute standardized data extraction tools with independent assessment of all the methodology, validity before inclusion in the study, followed by verbal discussion in a group setting to resolve disagreements. This systematic review of the literature aims to identify:

• Current policies in place to guide practitioners for the delivery of EI service in NYS.
• Other state influence on policies and procedures in NYS.
• Known barriers and facilitators to the implementation of telehealth and the relationship to implementation in NYS.

Stakeholder perspectives, including levels of satisfaction, facilitators and barriers during telehealth delivery of EI services in Suffolk County NY in response to COVID-19 pandemic as a temporary replacement of in-person service delivery.

Surveys and semi-structured interviews will be used to determine barriers and facilitators for EI services as perceived by both caregivers and service providers in Suffolk County, levels of satisfaction and effectiveness among these populations, and differences in barriers/facilitators and levels of satisfaction/effectiveness in those who have social disparities (e.g. digital literacy, access/availability of technology, single parent households). The long-term goal of this project is to expand the sample beyond Suffolk County and use the information to help develop guidelines for best practice in telehealth in EI programs across New York.

Clinical Implications

Evaluating perspectives and level of satisfaction from all stakeholders is vital to objectively determine the positive and negative effects of telehealth interventions. Unfortunately, COVID-19 brought about substantial changes to the delivery of early intervention services. This review will present objective recommendations to providers and bridge the gap between caregivers and consumers of early intervention telehealth services.

This data has the potential to be used in curriculum development for health professional student programs in which treatment in the EI setting is appropriate. If deemed successful, telehealth could be used in EI service delivery for immunocompromised children as well as those living in areas where access to a provider is scarce.

References


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