

Will AOD clinicians use online and app-based interventions when treating young people?

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Introduction and Aims: Online tools such as mobile phone apps and computer based resources are used by health workers to substitute or complement aspects of mental health treatment. There is little research around the use of online tools in alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment. We aimed to explore the opinions of clinicians working in the youth AOD field about their use of online tools.

Design and Methods: Data was collected through an online survey. The survey explored current use of online tools, views on future use and asked what kind of tools clinicians would like to see developed. More in depth qualitative information was gathered via telephone interviews to self-selected clinicians.

Results: 84% of the 95 respondents had 'heard' about the use of online tools in therapy, and almost half had used an online tool with clients. Overall, respondents were positive about the use of online tools and felt that they were an important addition to talking therapies. The majority felt that the online tools must be free of charge with easy access and evidence of efficacy.

Discussion and Conclusions: AOD clinicians are positive about the use of online tools to complement other treatment approaches when working with young people. The development of tested and effective apps and online treatments is likely to be embraced by clinicians and is not regarded as a threat to more establishing talking therapy approaches.