

Internet-Based Depression Intervention for Adolescent Moms

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Objective/Background:

Approximately 400,000 adolescents give birth in the US annually. Although half experience depressive symptoms, less than 25% comply with referrals for depression evaluation and treatment. The current study tested the effectiveness of an internet-based depression intervention on seeking depression information, intention to seek treatment and actually seeking depression treatment.

Methods:

Data were collected from community organizations across Kentucky. Based upon the Theory of Planned Behavior, the intervention included vignettes, questions and answers, and resources. Before the intervention, immediately after the intervention, and at two-week follow-up the adolescent mothers (n=151) answered questions related to seeking depression information, intention to seek depression treatment, and actual depression treatment. These responses were compared to similar data collected from adolescent mothers (n=138) in the control group.

Results

The adolescents were primarily African American (89.2%); less than high school educated (51.7%); gave birth in last year (97.1%); with a mean age of 18.2 years. The intervention led to significant increases in seeking depression information (D=4.4, p=0.028), intention to seek depression treatment (D=5.2, p=0.003) and actual depression treatment (D=6.7, p<0.001).

Conclusions/Discussion

Untreated postpartum depression creates an undue burden on public health and dramatically impacts mother-child relationships, her functioning at work and school, health-care-seeking behaviors, mothering skills, her own development, and her child's development. An internet-based depression intervention is an inexpensive method to increase rates of depression treatment.

Key words: adolescent, depression, internet

References

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