

Cognitive behavioral therapy cost-effective in depressed teens

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(HealthDay)—For adolescents with depression who declined or quickly

stopped using antidepressants, a brief cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) program is cost-effective, according to a study published online Jan. 19 in *Pediatrics*.

John F. Dickerson, Ph.D., from the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland, Ore., and colleagues randomized 212 youth with depression to treatment as usual (TAU) or TAU plus brief individual CBT. Depression-free days (DFD) and estimated quality-adjusted life-years (QALYs) were assessed as clinical outcomes. Over 12- and 24-month follow-up periods, incremental cost-effectiveness ratios (ICERs) comparing CBT with TAU were calculated.

The researchers found that over 12 months, youth randomized to CBT versus TAU had 26.8 more DFDs ($P = 0.044$) and 0.067 more QALYs ($P = 0.044$) on average. By the end of the 24-month follow-up period, the total costs were \$4,976 less ($P = 0.025$) among youth randomized to CBT. Per DFD, the total costs were $-\$51$ and $-\$115$ at 12 and 24 months, respectively (ICER, $-\$51$ [95 percent confidence interval, $-\$394$ to $\$9$] and $-\$115$ [95 percent confidence interval, $-\$1,090$ to $-\$6$], respectively). Per QALY, the total costs were $-\$20,282$ and $-\$45,792$ at 12 and 24 months, respectively (ICER, $-\$20,282$ [95 percent confidence interval, $-\$156,741$ to $\$3,617$] and $-\$45,792$ [95 percent [confidence](#) interval, $-\$440,991$ to $-\$2,731$], respectively).

"Brief primary care CBT among [youth](#) declining antidepressant therapy is cost-effective by widely accepted standards in [depression](#) treatment," the authors write. "CBT becomes dominant over TAU over time, as revealed by a statistically significant cost offset at the end of the two-year follow-up."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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