

# Internet and telephone assisted training for child disruptive behavior found to be effective

September 4 2018

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Positive long-term outcomes, such as a reduction in child disruptive behavior and increased parental skills, have been reported in a new study in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (JAACAP)*. For a large number of families, screened from the general population, internet- and telephone-assisted trainings that target disruptive behavior in children at age 4 decreases the likelihood of such disruptive behavior occurring. The program was effective 24 months after initiation.

Preschool children with disruptive behavior show significant functional impairment at home, daycare, school and in community settings. A number of studies have shown that this type of behavior has untoward, long-term, harmful consequences, including mental and physical health problems, crime, substance abuse, and increased risk of suicidality later in life. Untreated disruptive [behavior](#) disorders are some of the most costly early childhood psychiatric disorders. Parent training is one of the most effective approaches for the psychosocial treatment of disruptive behavioral problems in young children. However, no previous Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) has been conducted on an intervention offering remote or internet-assisted parental training and population-based screening. This study reports on two-year outcomes from [preschool children](#) with disruptive behavioral problems who were randomized to receive either an 11-week internet-assisted parental training or an educational control condition. The study is unique, in part,

due to its use of a population-based screening to facilitate enrollment and due to its long-term follow-up period with an assessment at 24 months which had a very low attrition rate.

Altogether, 730 of the 4,656 four-year-old children who attended annual child health clinic check-ups in Southwest Finland met the criteria for high level disruptive behavioral problems. 464 parents participated in the 11-week Strongest Families Smart Website (SFSW) intervention program, or an educational control (EC) group. When the SFSW and EC groups were compared between baseline and after the 24-month follow-up, the primary outcome of the Child Behavior Check List (CBCL) externalizing score showed significantly higher improvements in the SFSW group (effect size 0.22; p

Citation: Internet and telephone assisted training for child disruptive behavior found to be effective (2018, September 4) retrieved 15 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-09-internet-child-disruptive-behavior-effective.html>

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