



From the desk of Dr Harry

Internet Psychotherapy for Depressive Illness

Harry Zehnwirth MBBS (HON) FRACP

Does your child need counselling for depression? It is bordering on unbelievable even to me that 25% of adolescents have at least one depressive episode during the teen years! One in three boys!

Worse still, childhood depression can remain unrecognized and undiagnosed. The fallout is often insufferable despair for the child and family, as it manifests itself in other forms and symptoms. Cruel and relentless, depression can masquerade as sleep or eating disorders, school refusal, somatic symptoms such as headaches or abdominal pains and unexplained weight loss or gain. Some girls are crippled by the illness until it is picked up during a major flare up in the postnatal period. That's of course not to say that all PND is associated with a preceding history of depression.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) appears to be quite successful as a treatment modality for depression. CBT is a form of psychotherapy that helps a person to alter negative and pessimistic thinking habits, feelings and behaviors. It involves the use of practical strategies which are designed to bring about positive and immediate changes in the person's quality of life. Unfortunately there is an imbalance between supply and demand, and there are just not enough CBT therapists around to meet the tremendous need.

Research published last week in one of the world's most respected and reputable medical journals, *The Lancet*, captured my attention. The study looked at the possible benefits of web-based psychotherapy, only using keyboard chat with a licensed therapist. Nearly 300 British patients participated in the controlled trial, and the results were impressive and exciting.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19700005?ordinalpos=1&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum

Watch this space!

You can also click [here](#) for more information on depression.

Copyright oKIDokie Pty Ltd 2009.