

Evaluation of a Psychoeducation Group for Children presenting with Functional Tics



NHS

Great Ormond Street
Hospital for Children
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Background

- Rapid-onset functional tic-like behaviours (FTLBs) have increased in children and adolescents since COVID-19¹
- FTLBs appear to be related to underlying depression, stress, and/or anxiety²
- The evidence base for interventions to treat FTLBs is limited
- Clinical interventions are pragmatic with a focus on psychoeducation
- Goal-based outcomes (GBOs) allow children with functional movement disorder to set their own targets and measure change post-intervention³

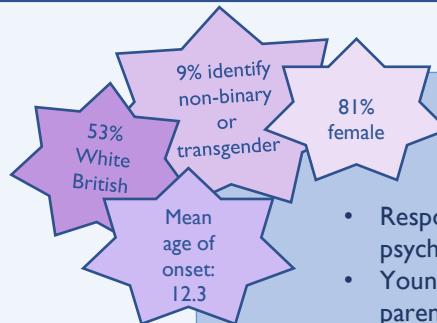
Objectives

To evaluate a one-off 2 1/2 hour psychoeducational group intervention on functional tics, measuring change in patient centred goals.

Methods

- A novel psychoeducational group intervention was developed for children, parents and professionals.
- GBOs collected before and after the group.
- Achievement of goals rated on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (fully met).
- Additional feedback was gathered after the group.
- 51 families attended 5 groups from May 2021 to April 2022.
- 38 GBOs.
- 31 feedback responses were collected.

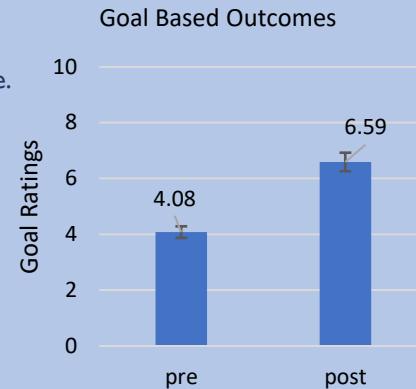
Results



“Seeing more of the kids and less of parents, mainly parents talking”

“Seeing others in same situation was re-assuring as children with these difficulties are not seen that often, it was very encouraging”

- Responses to psychoeducation are positive.
- Young people and their parents reported significant improvement in their goals following the group.
- $t(26) = 6.88, p <0.001$, Cohen's $d = 1.89$, a large effect size.



Discussion

- The Psychoeducation group for functional tics is accessible and feasible.
- Understanding the diagnosis is central to therapeutic intervention.
- Local professionals who attended had increased awareness of functional tics.
- Changes to the group have been made based on feedback.
- Future research to explore ethnic diversity within the population.

1. Heyman I, Liang H, Hedderly T. COVID-19 related increase in childhood tics and tic-like attacks. Archives of Disease in Childhood. 2021;106(5):420-1. 2. Han VX, Kozlowska K, Kothur K, Lorentzos M, Wong WK, Mohammad SS, et al. Rapid onset functional tic-like behaviours in children and adolescents during COVID-19: Clinical features, assessment and biopsychosocial treatment approach. Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health. 2022;n/a(n/a). 3. Robinson S, Bhatoa RS, Owen T, Golding K, Malik O, Hedderly T. Functional neurological movements in children: Management with a psychological approach. Eur J Paediatr Neurol. 2020;28:101-9.