

**TITLE:** Use of Apps for Care of Suicidal and Depressed Youth: Mental Health Provider Perspectives

**AUTHOR(S):** Frances Lynch, Nancy Vuckovic, Julie Cavese, Lucy Fulton

**PRESENTER(S):** Frances Lynch

**STUDENT SUBMISSION:** No

**TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE:** Use of apps within mental health treatment for youth with depression and/or suicidality. The audience is health policy makers and researchers.

**ABSTRACT:** About 16% of youth ages 12-17 experience depression, and 1 in 5 youth also report seriously considering suicide in the past year. Yet less than half receive any treatment. Lack of treatment is due in part to barriers to accessing services such as cost, lack of providers, and wait times. Partly in response to these challenges there has been rapid growth in mobile technology, such as smartphone apps, that address mental health concerns such as depression, but less is known about how apps are integrated into mental health treatment. We conducted qualitative interviews with mental health providers (n=17) from 6 states to explore providers opinions about use of mental health apps with patients. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data analysis was conducted using Atlas-ti qualitative software. We used a combination of deductive and inductive codes to conduct thematic analysis. Preliminary analyses suggest that most providers use apps to some extent with patients, but few have integrated apps into routine treatment. Initial themes include (1) importance that apps are evidence based, (2) concerns about patient privacy, (3) role of apps within therapy. Most providers are interested in expanding the use of evidence-based apps.

**OBJECTIVE(S):** Describe concerns mental health providers have about use of apps with adolescent patients with depression and/or suicidality.

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