

European Psychiatric Association (EPA) 2019

The 27th European Congress of Psychiatry, organised by the largest international association of psychiatrists in Europe; the EPA, took place from 6 April to 9 April 2019 in Warsaw, the capital and largest city of Poland. The motto of the congress was “Psychiatry in Transition: Towards New Models, Goals and Challenges.” This involved a key focus on the transitions of the organisation of mental health services, the diagnostic and treatment approaches to mental health care and research paradigms. Employing a community-based mental health system approach, the increasing emphasis on person-centred models of research and treatment, and the effectiveness of



new forms of interventions such as using e-mental health were some significant examples of the ongoing transition presented at the conference.

Several forums, symposiums and plenary lectures were held by leading experts in European Psychiatry such as Professors Silvana Galderisi, Umberto Volpe, Andrea Fiorillo amongst others over the four days of the congress. These talks included topics on current developments in psychiatric

epidemiology, rights of persons with disabilities, digital mental health, the use of avatars in treating psychosis and integrating addiction care into mental health services.

I was invited to give an oral presentation titled “Anxious attachment as a mediator between negative religious coping and distress levels among outpatients with first-episode psychosis in Singapore” that was based on preliminary results from an ongoing research study

being conducted by the team at IMH Research Division. The presentation was part of a session that included several other oral communications by researchers around the globe on the topic of “schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders”. The session was chaired by Professor Przemysław Bieńkowski from the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology in Warsaw. It was personally a very meaningful experience for me to be able to hear feedback from experts in this field of research, as well as to be able to engage in meaningful discussions about the research being conducted by others and about the state of mental health care in different countries.

In summary, the conference reiterated the need for and value in employing a holistic and multidimensional approach towards mental health care services. Additionally, new interventions in mental health care such as e-mental health have provided positive preliminary results and might be an important component in the future of mental health care.

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RegnaTales – An app-based anger management programme for children and adolescents



Anger issues are among one of the most frequent reasons that children and adolescents are referred for intervention. A significant number of childhood mental health problems, particularly attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder have features associated with anger, including irritability and aggression toward others. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been shown to be efficacious in the treatment of childhood anger problems but can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Furthermore, children referred for anger management may not have insight and motivation for change.

Games hold promise in building skills and imparting knowledge to children as they find the interactive features, simulations, and immersive environments both enticing and engaging. Serious games are defined as entertaining games with non-entertainment goals. Some games have adopted the CBT approach to address behavioral and emotional problems in children and adolescents. RegnaTales, a series of 6 mobile apps, was created in response to the above advantages of using mobile technology and serious games to increase access to treatment and enhance the motivation of children to learn skills.

We examined the usability and playability of RegnaTales, as well as children's aggression levels before and after the game play. A total of 72 children aged between 6 and 12 years were recruited for the study. Thirty-five participants had a clinical diagnosis of disruptive behavior disorders (DBD), whereas 37 were typically developing (TD) children. Each child played 1 of the 6 RegnaTales apps for approximately 50 mins before completing the Playability and Usability Questionnaire. The Reactive-Proactive Aggression Questionnaire was completed before and after the game play.

The overall results showed high levels of enjoyment and playability by both TD children and children with DBD, across the 6 mobile apps. 42% to 67% of the children indicated that they would like to play the games again. Importantly, children felt that they acquired skills in anger management, were motivated to use them in their daily lives, and felt confident that the skills would help them better manage their anger. Children reported significantly lower reactive aggression after playing the mobile apps Rage Raver ($P=.001$), Abaddon ($P=.008$), and RegnaTools ($P=.03$). These apps focused on the psychoeducation of the link between thoughts and emotions, as well as equipping the participants with various emotion regulation strategies such as relaxation and cognitive restructuring. Preliminary findings associated with reduction in reactive aggression suggests that RegnaTales could be a potential intervention to address anger issues among clinical and community populations.

Jeffrey, G. Ong, Nikki, S. Lim-Ashworth, Yoon, P. Ooi, Jillian, S. Boon, Rebecca, P. Ang, Dion, H. Goh, Say, H. Ong, & Daniel, S. Fung. (2019).

An Interactive Mobile App Game to Address Aggression (RegnaTales): Pilot Quantitative Study. *JMIR Serious Games*, 7(2), e13242

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