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FindWays: testing a co-designed website for parents to find ways to help their child's behaviour or emotions

Submission date
10/06/2021

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
19/07/2021

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
17/01/2025

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[X] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Mental health problems are common in children. The paediatrician is one of the most common professionals that families will go to for help. However, seeing a paediatrician has drawbacks such as long waitlists, they are expensive, and they generally aren't trained to deliver evidence-based talking therapy for behavioural or emotional problems.
The aim of this study is to find out whether a new co-designed website (FindWays) is an acceptable and feasible way to try and help families find ways to help their child's behaviour or emotions while they wait to see the paediatrician. FindWays was co-designed with parents in Geelong whose children were waiting to get help from the paediatrician for a behavioural or emotional problem.

Who can participate?
Parents of children aged 2-12 years with a behavioural or emotional problem who are seeing the paediatrician for the first time

What does the study involve?
Parents are randomly allocated to use the new website (treatment group) or to not use the website (control group) and access their usual supports. The FindWays website has information to help parents find ways to help their child behaviour or emotions. This information includes different parenting strategies participants can try at home, learn what different professionals or programs can do to help their child, and where to find local and available professional help.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Parents may find the website gives them new strategies to try at home to help their child's problem or helps them access new services while they wait. This may help the child's behaviour and the parent's mental health. The risks include using a new strategy or seeing a professional who won't be able to help their child.

Where is the study run from?
Murdoch Children's Research Institute (Australia)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
November 2020 to May 2023

Who is funding the study?
1. National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia)
2. Murdoch Children’s Research Institute (Australia)
3. Charity Drive Days (Australia)

Who is the main contact?
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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
HREC 75854

Study information

Scientific Title
The acceptability and feasibility of a co-designed website (FindWays) for parents of children with a mental health problem: a pilot randomised controlled trial

Study objectives
It is hypothesised that FindWays is an acceptable and feasible way of potentially helping parents find ways to help their child's behaviour and emotions while they wait to see the paediatrician. As this is a pilot randomised controlled trial (RCT), it will not be powered to assess effectiveness of parent, child or health service use outcomes.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 22/04/2022, The Royal Children's Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee (Research Ethics & Governance, The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, 50 Flemington Road, Parkville, 3052, Victoria Australia; +61 (0)3 9345 5044; Rch.ethics@rch.org.au), ref: 75854

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Mixed methods pilot randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)
Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Behavioural and emotional problems in children

Interventions
A statistician not directly involved in the analysis of the trial results will prepare the randomisation schedule. The randomisation schedule will be created by computer-generated random numbers, before the first participant has been recruited. The participant cohort will be stratified by child age (2-6 years old and 7-12 years old) and clinic. Within each strata, permuted block randomisation will be used to ensure balance between the website and control group. A randomly generated sequence of block sizes containing 2, 4, or 6 participants will be used. This will help ensure balance in numbers between website and control groups, prevent potential confounders of age or clinic type impacting the measurement of outcomes, and prevent any predictability in website allocation. The schedule will be held by an independent statistician, and allocation will not be revealed prematurely to CI Peyton. Because of these procedures, the research team will be unable to predict which group the participant will be allocated to.

The intervention consists of access to a new, co-designed website. This website, FindWays, offers parents relevant, credible and specific information on behavioural and emotional

problems. Hopefully, this will help the parent find ways to help their child's problem while they wait to see a paediatrician, over and above their usual supports (e.g., general practitioner). This information includes different parenting strategies they can try at home, learn what different professionals or programs can do to help their child, and where to find available professional help. On a semi-regular basis, parents in the intervention group will be sent a reminder to access the website. These reminders also contain some brief information about the purpose of the website. The timing and delivery of these prompts will be decided during a co-design session.

The control group will receive routine standard care. This care is provided by usual providers (e. g. general practitioner, existing online resources, teachers at school).

Overview of the methodology:
1. Participants will be recruited from paediatric clinics in Geelong, Victoria. They will be recruited if they have been recently referred because of a concern about their child's behaviour or emotions
2. If they consent to participate and complete their baseline measures, they will then be randomised to either the intervention or control group.
3. Those in the intervention group will have access to the FindWays website for 4 months. They will receive semi-regular reminders about the website.
4. At 4 months, they will complete a second set of measures and a qualitative interview describing their experience using the website.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Feasibility and acceptability are measured using:
1. Recruitment measured by the number of eligible participants who consent to participate in the study after 3 attempts to contact within a 3-month recruitment period
2. Retention measured by the number of consenting participants in the intervention group who access the website as measured by Google Analytics continuously over the 4-month trial
3. Likelihood of recommending the intervention as measured by a Likert scale (0-10) net promoter score at 4 months
4. Usability and safety feedback measured by qualitative interview at 4 months
5. Number of participants who complete all quantitative baseline measures and final measures at 4 months
6. Number of participants who access the website as measured by Google Analytics within the 4-month trial period
7. Tasks completed on the website (e.g. parenting strategies found, suitable professionals found) measured by parent survey at 4 months

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Child behaviour and emotions as measured by parent-reported Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) at baseline and 4 months
2. Family impact of the child's behaviour and emotions as measured by parent-reported SDQ impact statement at baseline and 4 months
3. Parent mental health and distress as measured by the parent-reported Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) at baseline and 4 months
4. Health services use measured by parent-reported surveys at 4 months

Completion date

01/05/2023

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Parent or carer of a child aged 2-12 years at the time of randomisation
2. Referred for a first appointment with a paediatrician to manage a behavioural or emotional problem
3. Has a behavioural or emotional problem as listed for review on the referral letter
4. Provide a verbal consent that is signed and dated by the researcher

Participant type(s)
Carer

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
34

Key exclusion criteria
1. Has a parent-reported diagnosis of an intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder
2. Child in out of home care
3. The paediatrician decides the child needs an early review (such as for a severe problem or to exclude a medical problem)

Date of first enrolment
02/05/2022

Date of final enrolment
01/01/2023

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Australia

Study participating centre
Murdoch Children's Research Institute
50 Flemington Road

Parkville
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Sponsor information

Organisation
Murdoch Children's Research Institute

ROR
https://ror.org/048fyec77

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
National Health and Medical Research Council

Alternative Name(s)
National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Government, NHMRC National Health and Medical Research Council, NHMRC

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
Australia

Funder Name
Murdoch Children's Research Institute

Alternative Name(s)
MCRI

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Research institutes and centers

Location
Australia

Funder Name
Charity Drive Days

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The data are not expected to be made available at an individual level. The researchers do not have ethics consent from participants to share individual-level data with other organisations. Data will be stored by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

IPD sharing plan summary
Not expected to be made available

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol article	protocol	21/03/2023	24/03/2023	Yes	No
Participant information sheet	version 1.4	05/04/2022	02/09/2024	No	Yes