



National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth: A qualitative analysis of administrator, provider and stakeholder views on the costs and benefits of treatment for problematic sexual behavior of youth

What is it about?

Youth with problematic sexual behaviors (PSB) initiate behaviors involving sexual body parts that are developmentally inappropriate or potentially harmful to themselves or others. This study, conducted by the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth (NCSBY), explores the costs and benefits of evidence-based treatment (PSB-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy PSB-CBT) based on interviews with 57 administrators, providers and stakeholders. PSB-CBT was provided to youth ages 10-14 in six communities across the United States. Interviews designed to evaluate community response to youth with PSB were conducted as part of a larger national study. Results of this study show costs and benefit impacts at multiple levels of the families and communities. Costs identified relate to direct treatment, case management, education and coordination of care. Interviewees identified multiple benefits and positive impacts on families and communities. PSB-CBT has therapeutic value and enhances public health and safety. Participants reported PSB-CBT positively impacted the family by building knowledge, enhancing skills, and improving behaviors. PSB-CBT was described as reducing the costs and burden on various stakeholder agencies by giving community-based options and reducing caseloads and stress. This paper summarizes the impressions of community professionals about the costs and benefits of PSB-CBT.

Why is it important?

Many communities do not have access to evidence-based treatment for youth with PSB and do not have resources available to ensure treatment or provide education for prevention. When we fail to provide evidence-based treatment and resources, we fail to realize benefits of treatment. These findings highlight the costs and benefits of treatment for PSB of youth. These include the value of PSB-CBT, positive impacts on youth, families, and victims, positive impacts on communities, program cost savings related to personnel, treatment and reduced costs to provide victim services.

Implications

The adverse effects of not treating problematic sexual behavior extend far beyond monetary considerations, and include nearly incalculable human costs to society, communities and families. Out-of-home placements, residential treatment, maintaining sex offender registries, and limited access to evidence-based treatment cost society millions. This study suggests that the cost to the community associated with not treating youth with problematic sexual behavior is greater than the cost of implementing PSB-CBT. Continued advocacy and funding for PSB-CBT will ensure that youth and families receive effective treatment, which promotes greater safety and well-being in communities throughout the U.S.

What Next?

This study is the first of its kind to explore costs and benefits of PSB-CBT on individuals, families, communities and society. Results have important implications for ongoing development and implementation of policies as they relate to costs and benefits of treatment. To access the entire study, use this link <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10488-019-00978-3>

Munday, P., Slemaker, A., Dopp, A. R., Beasley, L. O., Silovsky, J. F. (2020). Qualitative analysis of administrator, provider, and stakeholder views on the costs and benefits of a treatment for problematic sexual behavior of youth. Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 47(1), 126-137. doi: 10.1007/s10488-019-00978-3.

For more information, visit our website at <http://www.ncsby.org/> or contact OU-YPSB@ouhsc.edu. This summary was prepared by the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth within the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Department of Pediatrics, University of Oklahoma College of Medicine. The project was supported by cooperative agreements 2010-WP-BX-K062 and 2013-MU-MU-K102, awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Justice.