



Effective Health Care Mental Health Services for Children Experiencing Parental Divorce Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Mental health services for children experiencing parental divorce is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.

Topic Description

Nominator: Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in knowing the effectiveness of providing mental health services to children aged 5-10 (including individual, group, and play therapy) and outreach to families who are experiencing divorce compared to no intervention for these children, as well as the implications for mental health services and costs for these children as they begin to reach adulthood (aged 18-25). The nominator is concerned that children ages 5-10 experiencing parental divorce have increased needs for mental health services as adults and that this also increases the costs of care for these individuals.

Staff-Generated PICO

Population(s): Children aged 5-10 experiencing divorce

Intervention(s): Individual, group or play therapy for children, outreach for the family (specifically mentions "Kids Turn")

Comparator(s): No intervention

Outcome(s): Reduced need for adult mental health services; reduced costs of adult mental health services; improved interpersonal relationships.

Key Questions from Nominator:

1. For children experiencing a divorce, what is the effectiveness of mental health assistance or other outreach for the whole family versus no intervention?
2. What is the continued impact of divorce on children as they age into adulthood and their need for mental health care and costs?

Considerations

- The topic meets most EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)

- A literature scan identified 4 controlled studies and 18 observational studies on the effectiveness of mental health interventions for children experiencing parental divorce. However, the studies showed significant heterogeneity regarding the types of programs, study methods, focus or type of intervention, and methodological rigor, making comparisons difficult. Additionally, the scan identified no studies on the costs of mental health services for adults experiencing parental divorce as children. Therefore, this topic is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.