

Author reply to: Mental health problems of children and adolescents from the perspective of sports sociology. Comment on Parental involvement in technology-assisted interventions for childhood adversity: a systematic review

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Table of Contents

Original Manuscript.....	4
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Abstract

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Author reply to: Mental health problems of children and adolescents from the perspective of sports sociology. Comment on Parental involvement in technology-assisted interventions for childhood adversity: a systematic review

Dear editor,

We thank the authors for their thoughtful response and comments on our systematic review [1]. As discussed in our paper, comprehensive evaluations (including quantitative syntheses) of engagement strategies and outcomes in technology-assisted parenting programs is a significant gap in the parenting and child mental health literature. This gap is especially notable in light of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting the clear utility technology has for maintaining or at times improving parents' engagement with services and programs to support their young person's mental health. While heterogeneous definitions and measurement of engagement and a lack of engagement outcome data were indeed limitations to our review findings, we hope that our review provides a taxonomy of engagement strategies and measures that can help future work in the field to overcome these limitations.

The authors proposed that the field of sports sociology can play an important role in the prevention of mental health problems in adolescents. In particular, they outlined how family physical activity can promote a positive family environment, and how parenting behaviour that supports and encourages family physical activity can promote young people's mental and physical health. Given the strong link between ACEs and poorer mental and physical health outcomes, we agree that exploring theories and methods from the sociology of sport is a worthwhile avenue for innovative solutions to preventing and reducing the impact of ACEs on young people's mental health. Some technology-assisted parenting programs included in our study's analysis included a physical activity component, and we wish to offer the authors some insights that may inform future research.

Our review included findings from the 'Grow' parenting program, which aims to teach parents about key factors for healthy child development including physical activity and has demonstrated effectiveness in helping parents increase child outdoor playtime and meet health recommendations [2]. Parents appeared to engage well with both face-to-face and online versions of the 'Grow' program, however greater parental satisfaction with the face-to-face version led the authors to propose hybrid program models for future research to consider [3]. Our review also included findings from the 'Parenting Resilient Kids' program which includes a module on encouraging healthy habits such as promoting regular physical exercise. While parenting behaviours specific to physical activity was not independently evaluated, this program demonstrated effectiveness in improving target parenting behaviours covered across all modules selected by parents [4]. Furthermore, parents' engagement with the

program was shown to predict child health-related quality of life outcomes at 12-month follow-up [5].

We believe these findings highlight technology-assisted parenting programs as an innovative solution for integrating sports sociology in efforts to prevent young people's mental health problems. Given the link between parents' engagement with these programs and program outcomes, designing engaging programs is important for these solutions to be effective. We therefore propose that the authors and future research in this space consider drawing on the taxonomy of engagement strategies and measures presented in our review when designing such programs, to conceptualise engagement that is evidence-informed and facilitates evaluation.

Declaration of Competing Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest that pertain to this work.

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