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A Pilot Study to Examine the Feasibility and Potential Effectiveness of Using Smartphones to Provide Recovery Support for Adolescents.

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Abstract

ABSTRACT. Background: Smartphone applications can potentially provide recovery monitoring and support in real-time, real-life contexts. Study aims included determining feasibility of: a) Adolescents completing ecological momentary assessments (EMA) and utilizing phone-based ecological momentary interventions (EMI); and b) Using EMA and EMI data to predict substance use in the subsequent week. Methods: Twenty-nine adolescents were recruited at discharge from residential treatment, regardless of their discharge status or length of stay. During the 6-week pilot, youth were prompted to complete an EMA at 6 random times per day and were provided access to a suite of recovery support EMI. Youth completed 87% of the 5,580 EMAs. Based on use in the next 7 days, EMA observations were classified into 3 risk groups: "Current Use" in the past 30 minutes (3% of observations), "Unrecognized Risk" (42%), or "Recognized Risk" (55%). All youth had observations in 2 or more risk groups and 38%, in all three. Youth accessed an EMI on-average 162 times each week. Results: Participants were: 31% female, 48% African American, 21% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 24% Mixed/Other, average age 16.6 years. During the 90 days prior to entering treatment, youth reported using alcohol (38%), marijuana (41%), and other drugs (7%). When compared to the "Recognized Risk" group's use in the following week (31%), both the "Unrecognized Risk" (50%, OR = 2.08) and "Current Use" (96%, OR = 50.30) groups reported significantly higher rates of use in the next week. When an EMI was accessed 2 or more times within the hour following an EMA, the rate of using during the next week was significantly lower than when EMIs were not accessed (32% vs. 43%, OR = 0.62). Conclusions: Results demonstrate the feasibility of using smartphones for recovery monitoring and support with adolescents, with potential to reduce use.

KEYWORDS: Adolescent; Mobile Phones; Recovery Management; Smartphones; Substance Use Disorders

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