Group Family-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Pediatric Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Global Outcomes and Predictors of Improvement

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This open, uncontrolled study examined the efficacy of a group family-based cognitive behavioral therapy (GF-CBT) protocol in treating pediatric obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and explored predictors of symptom improvement. Eighty-five OCD-affected youth aged 8-18 years (M = 13.9 years, SD = 2.49; 46% male) and their parent(s) participated in a weekly, 12-session GF-CBT program. Data from multiple perspectives were gathered at the beginning and end of treatment, as well as at one-month follow-up. A broad range of assessment measures were utilized to capture clinically-relevant domains and a number of potential predictor variables were explored. Paired t-tests indicated that treatment was associated with significant reductions in clinician- and parent-rated OCD severity (d = 1.47, 1.32), youth and parent-rated functional impairment (d = 0.87, 0.67), coercive/disruptive behaviors (d = 0.75), and family accommodation (d = 1.02), as well as improvements in youth-, mother-, and father-rated family functioning (d = 1.05, 0.50, 0.88). Paired t-tests also indicated that youth remained improved at one-month follow-up. Step-wise regression identified greater homework success as a significant predictor of symptom improvement. This study provides evidence that GF-CBT significantly improves a wide range of domains for youth/families that extends beyond OCD symptom severity and supports homework as a core treatment component.

Keywords: Treatment; Open Trial; Parent Involvement; Homework; Coercive/Disruptive Behaviors; Family Accommodation; Family Functioning
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