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Doctors Discuss Delivering Online Psychological Treatment

Posted: 5:01 PM Oct 11, 2007
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Doctors from around the world met on UVa grounds Thursday to brainstorm new ways of delivering psychological treatment to patients through the internet.

There were about 60 people representing seven countries at the meeting working on cutting edge research to allow patients to get treatment from the comfort of their own home.

Patients that might otherwise not get treatment. Researchers believe that the work will impact large numbers of people while reducing the costs of psychological treatment.

Psychiatrists at Thursday's meeting hope to provide information to patients through the internet as kind of a self help book in an online intervention. Thursday they brainstormed new ideas and discussed what has and hasn't worked in their own studies.

"What this allows us to do is to talk out those things, maybe argue a little bit about what's right, what's not right, and try and come up with ways to optimize what we do so we really can deliver the kinds of treatment to people that will be most effective" said Dr. Lee Ritterband, UVa Psychiatry professor.

"Face to face therapy may be of equal effectiveness of internet based therapy, which is quite interesting really when you think of workforce issues. We're not going to have so many clinicians needed" said Dr. Helen Christensen, Australian National University professor.

Doctors say that they don't expect the internet to replace face to face psychological treatment but that it could be useful for certain problems or in combination with face to face treatment.

Thursday marked the third meeting this year for these researchers. Their last meeting took place in Stockholm, Sweden.

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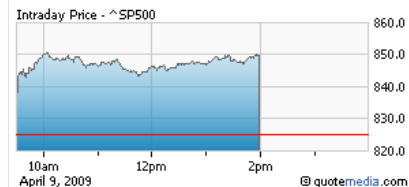


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