Use of Telehealth in Fellowship-affiliated Developmental Behavioral Pediatric Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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This study aims to describe the use of telehealth in developmental behavioral pediatric (DBP) fellowship-affiliated practices during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic. An electronic survey was disseminated to all DBP fellowship-associated practice locations to determine the use of telehealth in DBP care provision, before and since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. We analyzed responses using descriptive statistics. A total of 35 of 42 eligible practice sites responded (83% response rate). Most sites (51.4%) reported using telehealth less than once per month before the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the onset of COVID-19, 100% of programs reported conducting video-based telehealth visits multiple days per week. Most sites reported conducting evaluations and follow-up visits for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, behavioral concerns, developmental delay, genetic disorders, and learning disability. Most sites were able to continue medication management by telehealth (>88%), offer interpreter services for families with limited English proficiency participating in telehealth visits (>90%), and incorporate trainees and interdisciplinary team members in telehealth visits (>90%). Greater variability was observed in sites' ability to collect telehealth practice evaluation measures. Most sites are providing evaluations and ongoing care for DBP conditions through telehealth. The rapid adoption of telehealth can have ramifications for the way that DBP care is delivered in the future; therefore, it is imperative to understand current practice patterns and variations to determine the best use of telehealth.

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