Reviewer’s report

Title: Patients' perspectives can be integrated in health technology assessments: an exploratory analysis of CADTH Common Drug Review

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Reviewer: Jo NANSON

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Providing support to parents of children with an FASD is crucial because these children have high rates of behavioral problems that frequently lead to school problems and breakdown of family situations, resulting in use of foster care and residential placements. Any intervention that can strengthen family relationships and improve behavior in these children will be very helpful.

The use of on-line and telephone support to deliver a program has the potential to reach many more parents, especially those in rural, northern and remote areas where other services are limited. Most children with an FASD live with extended family or foster parents. The majority of children are from disadvantaged communities where substance abuse, mental illness, and poverty are co-existing problems.

Unfortunately the sample used in this study primarily consisted of white, married, well educated adoptive mothers, who are not representative of the majority of parents caring for children with an FASD. These women were likely to be technologically sophisticated and comfortable with the on-line format. In addition, many commented that the advice given was similar to their own parenting strategies. What they valued was confirmation that they were approaching the situation from a solid theoretical basis.

As a result, the generalizability of this study is limited to parents similar to their sample, i.e. well educated, stable women, and to not the majority of caregivers to FASD children, who are likely to be less technologically sophisticated, less educated and living in communities with more social problems.
As this is an interim analysis, the follow up after completion of the program will be of greater interest. The success of this program lies in its yet untested ability to reach out to less educated parents from multiple cultural groups.

An area that the authors do not discuss is cultural sensitivity. Many children with an FASD are of First Nations origin. To reach these families any program must be developed with support from the First Nations community and have content that is consistent with their priorities and values. This will be an important area for this program to develop.

In summary, this is a well written paper describing an important, innovative program. However because this is an interim analysis of the program, and the sample size is small (12 participants) and unrepresentative of the target population, the data are of limited interest to a broader audience.

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An article of limited interest

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