

E-Mental Health Services and Unmet Needs of Canadians

Description

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ABSTRACT

Improving mental health services has been a prominent issue for the public, politicians, the media, and private industry for many years. Although there is dialogue, this momentum has not produced significantly better policies or sufficient publicly accessible mental health services for the many Canadians in need. This lack of action has created a crisis of unmet need in many provincial and territorial health care systems. This condition will only worsen during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. If there is an insufficient increase in specialty and community services to meet the rising prevalence of mental illness in almost all ages and their use of hospital and emergency services, there could be a subsequent mental health pandemic. As a result, individuals with mental health problems will experience great difficulties accessing high-quality services for their mental health needs. There are many reasons why access challenges exist such as cost of services, public system capacity, stigma, and user knowledge of health system. Canada has an opportunity to address some of these challenges by supporting and promoting digital solutions in e-mental health. These solutions may provide treatment, support, coordination, or education to individuals who are unable to access traditional mental health services. In this way, Canada can also be a leader in providing innovative e-mental health solutions to more Canadians who need them. This paper reviews opportunities to ‘scale and spread’ services that help address unmet mental health needs of Canadian’s mental health.

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