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### Comparing Two Telehealth Approaches for Treating Psychiatric Disorders in Primary Care

REACH Dissemination Committee, Maine, USA

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# Comparing Two Telehealth Approaches for Treating Psychiatric Disorders in Primary Care

**Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)** are community clinics that provide primary care in rural and other underserved areas. FQHCs **often don't have enough mental health specialists** to treat patients with complex mental health conditions.

## LOCATION & POPULATION

► Patients received care at one of **24 clinics** from **12 FQHCs** in underserved areas in **Arkansas, Michigan & Washington**.



► **1,004 adults** with symptoms of PTSD, bipolar disorder, or both

► **Not currently taking medicines** prescribed by a mental health doctor



► **66% White**  
► **13% Black**  
► **21% Other race/ethnicity**

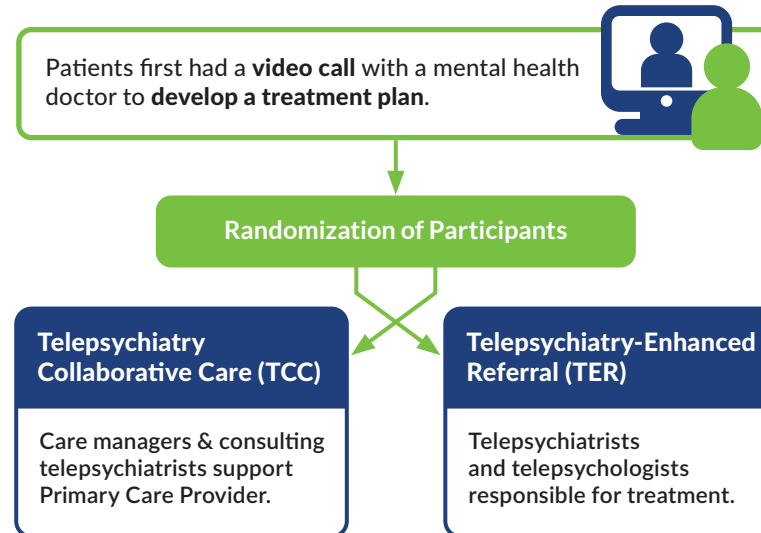
► **Average age: 39**

► **70% women**



## STUDY DESIGN

*The study compared two telehealth approaches for patients with complex mental health conditions who received care at rural clinics.*



## MEASURED OUTCOMES at 1 year

*Based on patient surveys including questions about quality of life, care received, and mental health.*

► **Between the groups, there was no difference in reports of:**

- quality of life
- severity of mental health symptoms
- satisfaction with care
- access to care
- medicine side effects



► **Both groups reported improvement in:**

- quality of life
- mental health symptoms
- side effects



► **Patient qualitative interviews showed that both models of care:**

- improved access to care
- had high levels of satisfaction



## Conclusions

Clinical leadership should implement whichever approach is more sustainable. From a societal perspective, policy makers should incentivize TCC because it required one-third as many telepsychiatry encounters as TER.

## REFERENCES

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2. Fortney JC, Bauer AM, Cerimele JM, et al. Comparison of teleintegrated care and telereferral care for treating complex psychiatric disorders in primary care: A pragmatic randomized comparative effectiveness trial: A pragmatic randomized comparative effectiveness trial. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2021;78(11):1189-1199. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2021.2318

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