

Many studies demonstrate secondary benefits for caregivers and siblings who participate in family-based therapies for child mental health problems. Yet, there are no systematic evaluations of the secondary benefits of family-based therapies, which suggests that current estimates of the cost-effectiveness of family treatments represent underestimates of the true economic benefits. In this study, we will use multilevel meta-analysis to characterize the nature and quality of research on the secondary benefits of family-based treatments for child mental health problems.

The results of the proposed study may have critical implications for public policy decisions as well as for continued evaluation of the broader effects of family-based treatments. First, the findings may affect the way researchers and clinicians conceptualize interventions for child mental health problems. Second, the findings may highlight important blind spots (e.g., secondary benefits of treatment to family members resulting in hidden cost savings) in outcome studies that might otherwise lend support to the cost-effectiveness of family-based treatments. Third, this study may motivate professional organizations and federal agencies to increase their advocacy for the dissemination of family-based treatments for child mental health problems.