Introduction. The demand for child and adolescent psychiatry (CAP) services often exceeds service capacity in sparsely populated rural areas. The lack of appropriate services may be damaging in conditions sensitive to neurodevelopmental maturation processes. Here we present The eHealth Services for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry – the eCAP project, which is one attempt to solve the problem of providing CAP services in peripheral areas.

Methods. The eCAP project include partners from Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Scottish Highlands in 2015-2018 and is financed by the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme. The project builds upon transnational learning and knowledge exchange between the partner regions. We aim to develop consultation, diagnosis, supervision, treatment and collaboration through modern information technology (IT). The intervention target groups are children and adolescents with mental health illness in remote areas. It also involves their families and professionals in primary and special health care, social care, and education.

We will develop and pilot operational models according to each region’s needs. For example, video conferencing will be tested as a setting for distant psychiatric treatment, and the use and suitability of the Development and Wellbeing Assessment (DAWBA) in primary health care will be studied.

Potential outcomes. Proficient consultation supports early identification and treatment of psychiatric problems, which may lead to a more rapid recovery. Increased co-operation between primary and specialized services optimizes resource use. Developmental environments (schools, daycare) can be better involved in the treatment process. Also burdensome travel for children and their families will decrease allowing more time for family activities supporting recovery. Services will be available to an increased number of citizens, and society’s resources will be used more effectively.

Conclusions. Utilizing IT in developing new models for providing CAP services should increase equity, as the needed services will be better available in remote, sparsely populated areas, and should contribute to the potential for young mental health patients to live a better life and be able to optimize their educational experience. Providing sufficient, timely outpatient CAP services is a global challenge. As the eCAP project’s solutions will be developed in a transnational process and evaluated accordingly, the results will most likely be useful in many other regions and countries.

Further information: http://www.ehealthresearch.no/eCAP