

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

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| TITLE (PROVISIONAL) | Mediators and theories of change in psychotherapy with adolescents: a systematic review protocol |
| AUTHORS | Taubner, Svenja; Saliba, Andrea; Heinonen, Erkki; Protić, Sonja; Volkert, Jana; Adler, Asta; Barkauskiene, Rasa; Conejo Cerón, Sonia; Di Giacomo, Dina; Ioannou, Yianna; Mestre, Jose; Moreno-Peral, Patricia; Mucha Vieira, Filipa; Pinheiro Mota, Catarina; Raleva, Marija; Rangel Santos Henriques, Margarida; Røssberg, Jan; Schmidt, Stefanie; Stepišnik Perdih, Tjaša; Ulberg, Randi; Sales, Célia |

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

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| REVIEWER | Ana Calderón Universidad Gabriela Mistral, Santiago, Chile |
| REVIEW RETURNED | 13-Oct-2020 |

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| GENERAL COMMENTS | <p>This is a long-overdue systematic review and cannot wait to read the article once it is completed. I hope the authors find enough good quality primary mediator studies with adolescents in order to have strong conclusions.</p> <p>The authors have written a good, comprehensive systematic review protocol. I only have the following short comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) In the abstract I would include information from the sections “types of participants” and “types of interventions”. As it is now, it only has information extracted from “types of studies”.2) The only thing that is not clear to me in the study protocol is whether the authors plan to analyse age mediators making within or between comparisons. In other words, are the authors planning to compare the results of this review with the information that is available for the adult patients or are they planning to compare stages within the adolescent sample? It is fair to expect different mediators in both cases.3) The database Epistemonikos (https://www.epistemonikos.org) could be of great help for searching the data for this systematic review. It includes 10 databases, one of which is PsycINFO. |
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer’s comments

The authors have written a good, comprehensive systematic review protocol. I only have the following short comments:

1) In the abstract I would include information from the sections “types of participants” and “types of interventions”. As it is now, it only has information extracted from “types of studies”.

We have included the following sentence in the abstract to describe types of participants and types of interventions in more detail: Participants will be adolescents between 10 and 19 years of age who suffer from a mental disorder or psychological difficulties and receive an intervention that aims at preventing, ameliorating and/or treating psychological problems.

2) The only thing that is not clear to me in the study protocol is whether the authors plan to analyse age mediators making within or between comparisons. In other words, are the authors planning to compare the results of this review with the information that is available for the adult patients or are they planning to compare stages within the adolescent sample? It is fair to expect different mediators in both cases.

The reviewer is correct to ask for a clarification. Indeed, we do not expect within differences concerning stages within the adolescent samples. However, a glance at the search so far yielded a more pronounced focus on behavioural mediators than relationship related (e.g. alliance) and thus we want to comment on differences between mediators used in research on adolescents in comparison to adult patients with information available by other reviews. We have made these clearer in the manuscript by adding the following sentence under data synthesis:

The age specific mediators will be identified by comparing results to mediators identified by reviews from adult psychotherapy.

3) The database Epistemonikos (<https://www.epistemonikos.org>) could be of great help for searching the data for this systematic review. It includes 10 databases, one of which is PsycINFO.

To use the database Epistemonikos is a very valuable suggestion. However, we have already performed the study selection in full text for more than 3000 studies and would be unable to re-perform that step. We surely hope for your understanding here. Furthermore, we have double checked if we have been missing important sources of information by not using Epistemonikos (that we simply did not know at the time of search) and are confident to claim that our search was sound as we have already included Pubmed, EMBASE and PsycInfo, whereas CINAHL and LILACS do not seem to cover the scope of our review and three additional only apply to reviews. Maybe Campbell Collaboration and EPPI would have helped our search and thus we will consider this database in the future.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

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| REVIEWER | Ana Calderon Universidad Gabriela Mistral, Santiago, Chile |
| REVIEW RETURNED | 03-Jan-2021 |
| GENERAL COMMENTS | Thank you for making the changes suggested by me (the inclusion of more information in the abstract and the clarification about the age comparison you are planning to perform). I understand that you did not know Epistemonikos at the time you did the search and I am happy that you will consider it in future studies. |