

# Health Technology Assessment on behalf of



## **Mental Health Rehabilitation for Children and Adolescents – Systematic overview of evaluation outcomes and instruments**

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Regarding future mental health rehabilitation (MHR) programmes for children and adolescents in Austria, we collected and analysed relevant evaluation content. Against this background, we undertook a systematic literature review encompassing MHR programmes (for children and adolescents) with a particular focus on evaluation indicators and instruments.

A systematic search of the literature was carried out in various databases and supplemented by an unsystematic hand search. The data extraction mainly focused on evaluation indicators and instruments, but also considered other aspects, such as mental health indications. The systematic literature search resulted in 685 references.

Owing to the thematic focus on indicators and instruments, only 6 single studies were ultimately included in this report. With regards to the evaluation methodology of MHR programmes for children and adolescents, our research revealed 5 evaluation indicators and 21 evaluation instruments. The following indicators were identified: Clinical symptoms, quality of life, functionality, rehabilitation process and rehabilitation satisfaction. The included studies used several subcategories which defined more profoundly the indicators (e.g. behavioural problems and strengths as a refinement of the indicator 'clinical symptoms').

Regarding the evaluation instruments, it turned out that most studies applied 'generic tools' which had been used in the studies across various mental health indications. Furthermore, our systematic review showed that the included studies mainly reported on children and adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems. However, since most MHR programmes for children and adolescents are based on cross-disciplinary rehabilitation approaches, all mental disorders that may affect children and adolescents could be considered for MHR measures. Although children and adolescents represented the major evaluation target groups in the included studies, some studies also involved parents in the evaluation process (e.g. in order to learn more about parental satisfaction with the rehabilitation programme etc.).

In summary, our systematic review shows that the low number of evaluation studies requires increased research activities in this particular field of MHR for children and adolescents. The 5 identified evaluation indicators cover key aspects of mental health rehabilitation and may represent a methodological starting point for the evaluation of MHR programmes for children and adolescents in a future project. However, the selection of evaluation indicators should consider the respective rehabilitation target groups and the overall rehabilitation priorities. In addition, there is a need for a careful selection of the evaluation instruments to take into account psychometric quality criteria, in order to guarantee the use of 'reliable' and approved test methods.

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