

# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

## HealthTech programme

### Equality impact assessment: Scoping

#### MT605 Digitally enabled therapy for chronic tic disorders and Tourette Syndrome in children and young people

The impact on equality has been assessed during this evaluation according to the principles of the [NICE Equality scheme](#).

1. Have any potential equality issues been identified during the scoping process, and, if so, what are they?

A number of potential equality issues have been identified for the population and intervention.

Digitally enabled mental health technologies have multiple equality considerations themselves, some of which are addressed in more detail in NICE's guideline on depression in children and young people: identification and management ([NG134](#))

Key aspects include:

- Patient-facing digital health technologies may be unsuitable for people with cognitive impairment, problems with manual dexterity or learning disabilities. Carer or advocate assistance may be required to navigate the program and consideration of this should be made by the company as well as the referring practitioner when considering appropriate intervention for the child or young person. Further considerations can be found in NICE Guidance on mental health problems in people with learning disabilities ([NG54, 2016](#)).
- Patient facing digital health technologies should ensure their program is accessible for screen readers (people with visual impairments) and those with hearing impairments.
- Children and young people with English as a second language may have difficulties navigating digital technologies provided in English.
- Peoples ethnic, religious and cultural background may affect their views of digital health interventions. Healthcare professionals should discuss the language and cultural content of digital health interventions with users before provision.

- Parent or carers of children and young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may find it difficult to engage in therapeutic material alongside the child or young person given the time demands of the programs.

Specific groups may particularly benefit from improved access to online behavioural therapy, for example:

- Those living in areas not currently served by specialist clinical centres might have difficulty travelling to face-to-face appointments if public transport is unreliable, costly and if parents are unable to drive them.
- Adolescents may have an increased engagement with this format of intervention.
- Children and young people from lower socioeconomic groups may lack the financial support required to ensure that they attend face to face sessions.
- Some children and young people may not have the family support needed to ensure that they attend face to face sessions. These children and young people may also have less support to seek help in the first place or to navigate the healthcare system.

However, accessibility would not be improved for those who are unable to engage with a digital service due to a lack of equipment, unavailability of internet connection or lack of experience with computers or lack the privacy needed to complete the intervention. Additional support and resources may be needed for these individuals.

Within the patient population:

- Tic disorders is more common in boys than girls at a ratio of 4:1

Interventions considered in the scope indications for use range in the age group they serve:

- Experts advised that typically children aged 8 and under are unlikely to be able to reliably identify urges, which is required to have positive outcomes with behavioural therapy.

- Median Nerve stimulation device Neupulse is currently indicated for use in children aged 12 and older.

Chronic tic disorders and Tourette Syndrome can significantly affect people's daily living. Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to do typical day-to-day activities. Age, sex, disability, race and religion are protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010).

2. What is the preliminary view as to what extent these potential equality issues need addressing by the Committee?

The committee should consider all the equality issues when making recommendations. In particular access to mental health care may not be improved for those who are unable to engage with a digital service due to a lack of equipment, unavailability of internet connection, lack of experience with computers or lack the privacy needed to complete the intervention.

3. Has any change to the draft scope been agreed to highlight potential equality issues?

No. No additional potential equality issues were raised than those already included in the scope.

4. Have any additional stakeholders related to potential equality issues been identified during the scoping process, and, if so, have changes to the stakeholder list been made?

No additional stakeholders related to potential equality issues were identified during the scoping process.

**Approved by:** Anastasia Chalkidou

**Date:** 18/1/2024