



YOUTHMOOD MONITORS TESTING TIMES FOR TEENAGERS

A national project to be undertaken next year for the Centre for Mental Health Research at the ANU will test the effectiveness of an Internet based program designed to reduce depression in teenagers.

The YouthMood Project will be a randomised control trial of the Centre's MoodGYM site, involving students from Years 9 and 10 in schools in every State and Territory.

The Director of the Centre, Professor Helen Christensen, said 2 schools in the ACT, 6 in NSW, 2 in Western Australia, 4 in South Australia, 3 in Victoria and one each in the Northern Territory and Queensland had agreed to participate in the trial.

"We'd love to see more schools involved in this project," Professor Christensen said. "Depression in adolescents and young adults is a serious problem in Australia, and Internet based programs appear to hold great promise in helping young people work through their issues".

"Today's students turn to the Internet to solve problems and assist their school work. The MoodGYM site is therefore a natural choice for young people, because it offers anonymity, information, demonstrations and exercises designed to help users identify whether they're at risk of developing mental health problems", she said.

"MoodGYM has been operating for a number of years, and has proved highly popular, with over 4,000 unique visits a week. It provides information about how to address mental health problems and develop effective thinking strategies and coping skills. The YouthMood Project aims to test the effectiveness of MoodGYM and the results will have applications for other Internet based programs designed to help people with mental health issues", Professor Christensen said.

"The trial will begin in February and run through most of next year. The Centre will hold a one day teacher training workshop in November this year, to provide participating schools with more detailed information about MoodGYM and the YouthMood Project", she said.

"The teachers will also be given an overview of the serious mental health problems facing today's young people and details of previous research in this area. It is exciting that so many schools are interested in the use of new technologies to promote life long skills in young people".

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