

Summer Residential Camps improve teenagers with congenital heart disease feelings of Stress, Anxiety and Depression

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INTRODUCTION

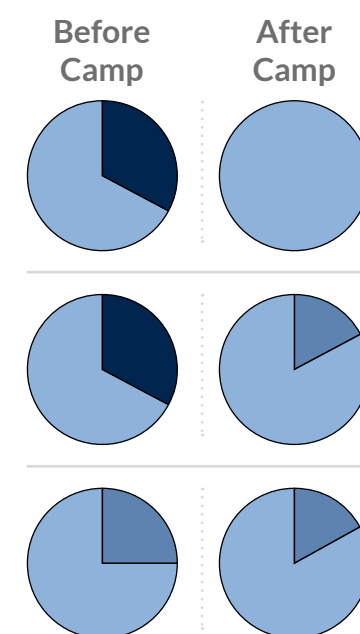
Adolescents with Serious Congenital heart disease (SCHD) are at an increased risk of behaviour disorders such as anxiety, depression and social withdrawalⁱ. Psychological based interventions have been proposed as potentially helpful therapeutic strategies for Adolescents and Adults with SCHDⁱⁱ.



METHODS

Twelve young people (aged 12-17 years) with a background of SCHD attended for a 2 day residential summer camp. The Camp included adventure sports, team building activities, motivational workshops and opportunities for recreation. Volunteers, including medical and specialist nursing staff, facilitated and provided supervision. Participants' feelings of stress, anxiety and depression were measured before and after the camp using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales for Youth (DASS-Y)ⁱⁱⁱ. Feedback on the camp structure was also collected from the participants and their families.

RESULTS



33% (4/12) of participants had DASS-Y Scores for stress prior to the camp graded as moderate to severe. This improved to 100% of participants had (12/12) normal scores after camp.

33% (4/12) of participants had DASS-Y scores for anxiety from Moderate to Extremely Severe prior to camp and this improved to 83%(10/12) Normal and 17%(2/12) Mild to Moderate after camp.

Depression scores improved from 25% (3/12) participants reporting mild depression to 17% (2/12) participants reporting mild depression at the end of the camp.

Furthermore, written feedback from all of the participants and their families was overwhelmingly positive.

CONCLUSIONS

Residential camps involving small groups of adolescents with SCHD improves feelings of stress, anxiety and depression in the short term. Further research is required to evaluate the long-term impact that such interventions have on young people with congenital heart disease's mental health.