Electronic Bridge to Mental Health for College Students: A Randomized Controlled Intervention Trial

Examining the efficacy of Electronic Bridge to Mental Health for College Students (eBridge) for increasing at-risk students’ linkage to mental health services.

Conclusion: eBridge shows promise for reaching a relatively small subset of college students at risk for suicide; however, engagement was low. This highlights the urgent need for more effective strategies to engage young adults in online mental health interventions.

Key Findings:

- Among students assigned to eBridge, 21% posted ≥1 message, and 10% posted ≥2 messages to the counselor.
- In intent-to-treat analyses, there was no eBridge effect on obtaining MH services. However, within the eBridge group, students who posted ≥1 message were significantly more likely to link to MH services.

The goal of eBridge is to facilitate the linkage of students with elevated suicide risk to professional mental health (MH) services following a web-based screening.

- Theoretically based in health behavior theories
- Incorporates principles of motivational interviewing
- Offers optional personalized feedback and online counseling

Students from four universities were recruited via email.

Those with ≥2 suicide risk factors who were not receiving treatment were randomized to either eBridge (including personalized feedback with option of online counseling) or a control group.

The primary outcome of interest was linkage to MH services within 6 months.