Michaela Patton – University of Calgary

Project: *Internet-delivered cognitive behavioral treatment for survivors of childhood cancer with chronic pain: A randomized pilot feasibility study*

Biography

Michaela Patton is a Clinical Psychology PhD student studying under the mentorship of Dr. Fiona Schulte. Michaela is originally from Washington and graduated from Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. She earned her Master of Science in Clinical Psychology from the University of Calgary, where her master´s thesis project focused on comprehensive assessment of pain in survivors of childhood cancer.

Michaela´s doctoral dissertation project will test an internet-delivered cognitive behavioral therapy for survivors of childhood cancer struggling with chronic pain. Michaela is also passionate about including patients as partners in her research.

Project Summary

Background: Over 30,000 survivors of childhood cancer live in Canada today, but two-thirds will experience negative long-term side-effects of their toxic treatments, like chronic pain. This is concerning because young people with chronic pain report more worries, depressed mood, and difficulty sleeping. Chronic pain is one of the most common reasons for seeking healthcare costing the Canadian healthcare system about $60 billion per year. An internet-delivered program called Web-Management of Adolescent Pain (WebMAP) rooted in cognitive-behavioural therapy has been shown to improve pain in young people but has not been tested in survivors of childhood cancer. In this study we aim to see if WebMAP can be used on survivors and whether it will help to improve pain, mood, worries and sleep.

Methods: We will invite 34 survivors of childhood cancer and their parents from the Alberta

Hospital to take part in our study. We are looking for survivors who: (1) are 10-17 years old, (2) have chronic pain, and (3) have computer access. Survivors will be asked questions about their pain, worries, mood, and sleep. Then, survivors and parents will complete WebMAP over the course of eight weeks. After they finish WebMAP, they will be asked the same questions again. We will record the number of survivors who are interested in WebMAP, who complete WebMAP, and whether they like WebMAP for the treatment of their pain. Finally, we will interview survivors after they finish WebMAP to get more feedback on changes we might make to the intervention.

Relevance: Pain can be extremely distressing and it is important to help survivors of childhood cancer improve their pain. This treatment might also be successful in improving other distressing symptoms like worries, depressed mood, and difficulty sleeping. Demonstrating that survivors of childhood cancer like WebMAP and find it helpful in managing their pain will be an important step toward improving long-term follow-up care for this population.