A Feasibility Study of a Problem-Solving Workshop for Children Diagnosed with LQTS and their Parents: A Pilot Study of Two Dyads

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INTRODUCTION

- Long-QT Syndrome (LQTS) is an inherited cardiac condition that predisposes individuals to cardiac arrhythmias.
- Commonly diagnosed in childhood.
- Affects approximately 1,200 persons.
- The clinical manifestation of LQTS is syncope, ventricular tachycardia, or a fast heart rhythm, and sudden death often triggered by physical exertion, emotional stress/sadness, sleep, medications that affect the QTc interval, electrolyte imbalance, often associated with dehydration.
- Treatment includes medication, implantable cardiac devices or personal AEDs, or other lifestyle modifications including exercise restrictions.
- Living with chronic medical conditions in adolescence comes with many critical lifestyle changes and restrictions.
- These lifestyle changes and restrictions may compromise psychosocial development.
- Social problem-solving skills have been shown to enhance one’s ability to cope with both minor and major daily stressors and minimize psychological problems associated with physical health problems.
- The present pilot study was developed to identify the feasibility and efficacy of a problem-solving workshop to increase problem solving, self-efficacy, coping, and locus of control in children with LQTS and problem solving, worry, hope, and coping in parents of children diagnosed with LQTS.

METHOD

Participants
- Child Participants
- Parental Participants
- Procedure
  - IRB approved study
  - Participants recruited through online methods (e.g., Facebook, Craigslist, SADS) & local hospitals.
  - Families arrived at PCOM at 9:00am and completed baseline questionnaires.
  - The workshop ran for approximately 4 hours.
  - Workshops conducted jointly by two advanced clinical psychology doctoral candidates
  - Children and their parents were introduced to and taught the steps of the Social Problem-Solving Model, which included Problem Orientation, Problem Definition and Formulation, Generation of Alternatives, Decision Making, Solution Implementation, and Solution Verification.
  - Vignettes of common LQTS-related problems were presented to the group for practice and implementation of the Social Problem-Solving Model.
  - Participants completed follow-up questionnaires at 1- and 3-months post workshop.
  - Compensated with $20 in gift cards for follow-up questionnaire completion via SurveyMonkey.
  - Integrity checks conducted by 3 independent raters to verify integrity of the workshop to the prescribed protocol.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The baseline assessments and workshop follow-up (1- and 3-month) assessments were analyzed to evaluate change:
- Child participants in problem-solving abilities, coping, self-efficacy, and locus of control.
- Parental participants in problem-solving abilities, coping strategies, worry, and hope.

CONCLUSION

- The findings of this study suggest that a one-time problem-solving workshop may be feasible and effective for parents of children diagnosed with LQTS.
- The inclusion of parents in the workshop is believed to have helped facilitate children’s short-term gains on outcome measures.
- Although the outcomes are preliminary, they suggest that there may be important benefits to teaching children problem-solving skills and helping parents to coach their children in learning skills to deal with LQTS-related problems.
- The preliminary results also offer some indication about the potential effectiveness of the interventions.
- Results demonstrate that continual support and review of problem-solving skills is likely necessary to facilitate long-term gains of problem-solving, coping, and adaptive skills.
- It is suggested that future workshops provide parents with guidelines on how to reinforce the use of problem-solving skills, which may include telephonic coaching of problem-solving skills at 1- and 3-months post-workshop.
- Results of this study can assist physicians and medical professionals to refer social problem-solving skills to children diagnosed with LQTS.
- This study demonstrates that continual support and review of problem-solving skills may be necessary to facilitate long-term gains of problem-solving, coping, and adaptive skills in children.
- Further investigation of utilization of this workshop as a tool to help children and their families cope better with the daily LQTS-related events is needed.

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REFERENCES


