

AI Chatbots and Mental Health: Use Rates, Risks, and Benefits

Participants:

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Symposium Synopsis:

AI chatbots have quickly become a common source of mental health support, with utilization increasing exponentially in recent years. This symposium explores the use rates, risks, and benefits of these tools. Findings from a review study will be shared that synthesized data across 18 survey studies to obtain an estimate of how many AI chatbot users are turning to these tools for mental health support. A survey study of mental health providers will provide insights into clinicians' experiences of AI chatbots, including reported frequency of patient use, perceptions of care quality, and needs for training and education. Finally, a functional typology of AI chatbot-associated psychotic phenomena will be presented, discussing the various ways in which chatbots can precipitate or worsen psychotic symptoms. Together, this collection of studies will provide valuable information regarding the use of AI chatbots for mental health support as well as their potential benefits and drawbacks. The use of AI chatbots will likely only increase with time; thus, it is important to increase our understanding of their pros and cons to ensure positive and safe outcomes for patients.