Akili says video game therapy for ADHD works, but it'll need to get in with health insurers to get consumers on board

Article





Akili Interactive published full results of a clinical trial, 2020 STARS Adjunct, that boast the effectiveness of its video game therapy for children with ADHD, **EndeavorRx**.

- The study included 206 ADHD-diagnosed children ages 8 to 14. One cohort took accompanying ADHD medications with the digital treatment, and another used only the digital treatment—both groups showed similar and statistically significant improvements on the ADHD Impairment Rating Scale.
- According to parents, half of participants <u>exhibited</u> stable improvements after one month using EndeavorRx, which increased with a longer duration: 68.3% of children showed improvements in ADHD-related impairments after two months of using the video game therapy.

Child psych experts say the stress of remote learning amid the pandemic is exacerbating ADHD symptoms and spurring new ADHD-related evaluations. In March of last year, there was a 67% increase in ADHD diagnoses in patients aged 13 to 17 compared with 2019, according to an Athenahealth study. And requests for providers who specialize in ADHD have jumped 60% since March 2020.

The rise of pediatric ADHD diagnoses means many parents will be seeking treatment options—and they're likely to seek out drug alternatives for their children's ADHD.

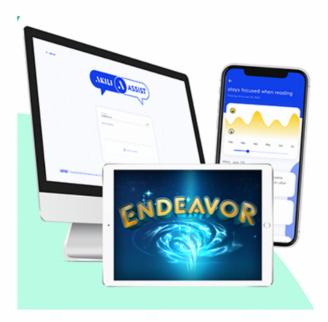
- Some parents are averse to giving their children drugs to ADHD, and meds aren't always the best option for treating the condition. Common drugs for ADHD are deemed safe by many docs, but they still come with possible side effects like sleep problems and decreased appetite. And even if parents opt for traditional meds, recent studies suggest a hybrid approach that includes medication and non-medication treatments is best.
- That means Akili has a solid chance of appealing to a large consumer base on the hunt for non-drug options. Over 10% of children have been diagnosed with ADHD in the US alone.
 - However, Akili has yet to obtain any coverage by major payers—who will be key in helping stoke adoption via their digital health formularies:
- Payers are a major channel DTx devs get their tools to patients. For example, Blue Cross Blue Shield North Carolina is teamed up with DTx vendor Virta to offer all members under 65 access to DTx for type 2 diabetes. A lack of insurance coverage means there will likely be a high price point for a DTx tool, which could deter some parents from trying it out: Due to a



lack of insurance, a 3-month membership for EndeavorRx costs \$450, while traditional ADHD medication costs \$85 for 60 tablets without insurance.

Payers will only partner with DTx startups pulling out receipts of clinical evidence—which means Akili could be gearing up to strike a deal with a massive payer like Cigna. For context, payer execs indicate the more clinical evidence there surrounding the efficacy of a DTx tool, the higher chance it has tying up with a commercial payer. And considering Akili's latest clinical trial results and the growing demand for ADHD med alternatives, its clinical trial results could help it partner up with a commercial payer like Cigna: Its health services subsidiary Evernorth already includes DTx tools like Omada's and Hinge Health's, for instance.

Akili's EndeavorRx Video Game Treatment for ADHD and Accompanying App







and call center



Source: Akili Interactive

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