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Abstract Title

Profiling Parenting Stress and Mental Health in Canadian Families Accessing the LightBEAM Program

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Background

Parents of young children often experience increased psychological demands, including stress, depression, and anxiety. Digital mental health interventions may increase access while reducing barriers to care; understanding who accesses these interventions can inform their development.

Objective

This study examines mental health symptoms among Canadian parents enrolled in LightBEAM, a self-guided digital parenting and mental health intervention.

Methods

195 Canadian primary caregivers of children aged 1.5-8 years enrolled in LightBEAM between February and September 2025. LightBEAM is a self-guided digital parenting and mental health intervention designed to support parents of young children. Participants completed baseline measures of parenting stress, depressive symptoms, anxiety, and anger. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations characterized psychological functioning and associations among study variables.

Results

At baseline, participants had a mean age of 37.81 years (SD = 4.62; range = 25-49). Using established clinical thresholds, 143 participants (73.3%) reported elevated parenting stress (PSI-SF ≥ 90), 120 (61.5%) met the clinical threshold for moderate-to-severe depressive symptoms (PHQ-9 ≥ 10), and 107 (54.9%) met the clinical threshold for moderate-to-severe anxiety symptoms (GAD-7 ≥ 10). Mean PROMIS Anger scores were 17.17 (SD = 2.86). Parenting stress was positively correlated with depressive symptoms ($r = .51$, $p < .001$), anxiety ($r = .34$, $p < .001$), and anger ($r = .52$, $p < .001$). Depressive symptoms were also positively correlated with anxiety ($r = .61$, $p < .001$) and anger ($r = .47$, $p < .001$).

Conclusion

Preliminary findings indicate that Canadian parents accessing LightBEAM present with substantial parenting stress alongside symptoms of depression, anxiety, and anger. These findings characterize families accessing a scalable, self-guided intervention and highlight the complex mental health needs of this population. Ongoing analyses will examine intervention engagement and identify distinct profiles of parenting and mental health difficulties to inform the development and implementation of digital supports for families.