

**THERAPEUTIC VIDEO GAME
RICKY AND THE SPIDER**



Universität Zürich

Problem – Challenge

International studies show that approximately 2% of all children suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Without treatment, pediatric OCD often takes a turn for the worse. The longer the patient has been suffering from the disorder prior to diagnosis and the earlier OCD manifests itself, the worse the prognosis will be. Although cognitive behaviour therapy, eventually combined with medication, is the treatment of choice for OCD in children, there is a shortage of therapists available to treat pediatric OCD, as well as a lack of developmentally appropriate treatments that are tailored to the needs of younger children. Thus, enhancing the dissemination of evidence-based treatment strategies in the community is a considerable challenge. This is done by means of a therapeutic video game.

Solution

Ricky and the Spider was developed by Dr. Veronika Brezinka at the Center for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry of the University of Zurich to help support behavior therapists in their work with children who suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder. It integrates the most important therapeutic treatment elements of cognitive behavior therapy in a playful manner. The game helps to facilitate the understanding of the illness, its consequences and its subsequent treatment by illustrating this metaphorically. Ricky and the Spider aims to encourage children to confront their OCD and offers support to behavior therapists treating children with OCD. The game is distributed by the University of Zurich and intended to be played with the guidance of a psychotherapist or child psychiatrist.

