



Avoidant restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID): treatment outcome

Agnes von Schreeb, Doctoral student, Karolinska institutet, Department of Clinical Neuroscience (CNS)

Introduction: Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) affects an estimated 12% in clinical settings and 2.8% in the general population and causes significant nutritional, developmental, and psychosocial impairment. Despite its prevalence, no evidence-based treatments have yet been established, and no internet-delivered interventions exist for this population. At Stockholm Centre for Eating Disorders (SCÄ), a guided internet-delivered family-based treatment — iARFID — has been developed and implemented for children aged 5–17. This doctoral project systematically evaluates and refines iARFID, directly bridging the gap between clinical innovation and research evidence.

Aims: The project aims to (a) identify areas for improvement in iARFID through caregiver experiences, (b) evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effects of a revised treatment, (c) explore the lived experience of families undergoing treatment, and (d) investigate whether augmented support for non-responding families improves treatment outcomes.

Methods: The project comprises four sequential studies. Study 1 uses coding reliability thematic analysis of qualitative interviews with caregivers who completed iARFID v1, informing a treatment revision. Study 2 evaluates the revised iARFID in a longitudinal effectiveness study (pre, mid, post, 6-month follow-up; $n \approx 60$) using Linear Mixed Modeling. Study 3 qualitatively explores the lived experience of families in the revised treatment through reflexive thematic analysis. Study 4 is a pragmatic block-randomized clinical trial using Bayesian sequential analysis, testing whether two additional support sess-

ions for gradual non-responders at week 5 improves end-of-treatment outcomes.

Clinical implications: By developing and evaluating iARFID within an active clinical setting, findings will directly inform practice at SCÄ and contribute to building the evidence base needed to establish internet-delivered ARFID treatment at a national and international level.

Supervisors: Thomas Parling, PhD, Karolinska institutet, Department of Clinical Neuroscience (CNS) (main supervisor)

Ata Ghaderi, professor, Karolinska institutet, Department of Clinical Neuroscience (CNS)

Elisabeth Welch, associate professor, Karolinska institutet, Department of Clinical Neuroscience (CNS) & Ätstörningsenheten för vuxna, Uppsala Akademiska Sjukhus, Region Uppsala