



# Healios

## **New research backs the success of online autism assessments in overcoming families' initial anxieties about not being 'face to face'**

New research conducted by Healios provides valuable insights into families' experiences before, during and after an online autism assessment.

Healios is the UK's leading digital-first provider of autism, ADHD and mental health services for children and adults, delivering thousands of online assessments every year in collaboration with dozens of NHS trusts and health boards across the UK.

The provider's science team set about its latest research to better understand how the families it works with felt about the online assessment process.

Dr Sonia Ponzo, VP of Science at Healios, said: "Given the increasing number of services that have started providing online autism assessments, it's imperative that we understand how families feel about them, and identify what could be done to ease any concerns or anxieties they may have."

The research, led by Healios' Senior Mental Health Scientist Dr Kerri Bailey, examined how families felt both before and after having an online assessment to determine whether any of their initial concerns are due to a lack of exposure and information surrounding online assessments, as opposed to the quality of the assessment itself.

Dr Bailey said: "We embarked on this project because we know that parents do tend to have concerns with the assessment process being online, and we wanted to delve into more detail as to why they have these anxieties and whether there is something providers can do to ease them.

"Therefore we asked over 350 families with a child who received an online autism assessment through Healios how they felt when they were first referred for their assessment, and then we asked them to tell us how they felt when they had actually completed the process with us.

"The results showed that families rated the online service highly, with over 93% agreeing that Healios made them and their child feel safe and respected. We also found that any concerns and anxieties they had when they entered the service significantly decreased once they had completed the assessment with us."

Dr Bailey said her and her team were also keen to know what information families would like to know upon referral to encourage them to choose an online service.

“We found that having evidence that Healios’ service is high quality and accurate, and proof that an online assessment is just as good as in-person, would have helped ease their initial anxieties,” she said.

“Overall families rated Healios’ service extremely highly, with over 91% stating they would recommend the service to friends and family. However, information about the quality of the service wasn’t made easily available to them at the point of referral, which contributed to their anxiety ahead of the assessment.

“Furthermore, the families could have benefitted from knowing about the benefits of online assessments - such as the fact that they provide better flexibility to both parent and child, since the assessment can be attended from the comfort of their own home.

“There’s also no transportation problems and costs, and potentially less upheaval to the child’s daily routine by not having to take them to a clinical setting. All together this helps to make the whole experience less stressful at an already difficult time.

“We hope this research will help shape how providers at different points throughout the assessment process approach preparing and informing families about what to expect, so that parents can focus on what really matters - getting the support they need for their child.”

The research is being released during Healthcare Science Week (March 11-15) which aims to celebrate and raise awareness of the important role science plays in healthcare.

Dr Bailey said studies such as this show the importance of embedding science in the digital mental health industry, as it enables companies to truly understand their customers and improve services using data-driven insights.

She added: “As a science team we’re here to gather evidence to improve our service - and help make the whole system less fragmented and more user centred.”

The paper has been submitted for publication, and can now be viewed [here](#).

Anyone looking for more information about Healios and the online assessment process can visit <https://healios.org.uk/> or any organisation looking to find out more about Healios’ pathway can visit <https://healios.org.uk/healthcare-organisations/>

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**Notes to editors**

**About Healios**

Healios is the UK's leading digital provider of specialist autism, ADHD and mental health services for children and adults. Healios is reimagining the care experience by optimally combining an expert multidisciplinary care team with evidence-based, family-centred approaches and great technology.

Healios uses its purpose-built virtual care platform, Panacea, to connect families with their team of expert clinicians. So far, Healios has delivered over 200,000 clinical sessions and accepted over 50,000 referrals from the NHS.

At Healios, we work proudly in partnership with over 60% of England's NHS mental health local services and health boards in England and Wales and over 50% of mainland Health Boards in Scotland, to increase capacity and reduce wait times for local services.

Over 80% of our NHS customers recognise the value we add to their service and have long term partnerships with us. And most importantly, our services are making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people and their families, with a resounding 91% recommending Healios.

Our neurodiversity services include; autism assessments, ADHD assessments, dual autism and ADHD assessments, post-diagnosis support for family and adapted interventions to support co-existing mental health difficulties.

To learn more about Healios, visit [healios.org.uk](https://healios.org.uk) or email [commercial@healios.org.uk](mailto:commercial@healios.org.uk)

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