Category
Mental Health

Project title
Acquired brain injury in a digital world

Associated Researcher(s)
Amy Orben, Fionnuala Murphy, Polly Peers, Tom Manly

Project details

Acquired brain injuries (ABI) are a leading cause of long-term disability, with cognitive, mood and social difficulties being common impairments. Traumatic brain injuries (TBI; e.g. from car and sports accidents) are among the most common causes of ABI and particularly affect the young (for example, each year approximately 50,000 US adolescents are hospitalised with TBI; Asemota et al., 2013). The negative impact of such injuries on the development of peer relationships and for mental health in general is well documented. Relatively little is known, however, about the use, risks and benefits of the digital world in people with ABI. Important questions include whether cognitive impairments form barriers to social media engagement, whether individuals isolated from local peer support are able to find this online, and potential risks to self-esteem and mental health. Other questions include the use of digital devices to support cognitive function, to reinforce rehabilitation goals and to track mood and activity with reduced requirements for accurate memory and self-report.