Today’s piece is by Liz Abernathey, MD and comes from a National Public Radio story, [For Kids with Tourette’s, At-Home Training Could Help](http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/07/22/424722960/for-kids-with-tourettes-at-home-training-could-helpJ).

This article explores treatments for Tourette’s, ending with a discussion about a new online, 8-week computer-based program called TicHelper that patients can utilize at home. Costing $150, TicHelper guides patients through four phases of training: tic education, reducing tic triggers, tic awareness and tic blocking, and is modeled after a therapist-guided cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) proven approach called “C-BIT” (comprehensive behavior intervention for tics).

The article’s strengths are in its conveyance of the range of tic-reduction treatments, and its emphasis that medication is one option for managing Tourette’s, but that medications “have side effects and don’t always work.” Further, the article cites perhaps the most important potential advantage of TicHelper, which is its accessibility and relatively low cost. C-BIT is notorious for its paucity of trained providers, so that the prospect of the introduction of a home-based program like TicHelper is tremendously exciting. The author appropriately notes that TicHelper is not meant to fully replace C-BIT but may be a useful adjunct while waiting for or receiving traditional C-BIT.

NPR readers/listeners may be persuaded that TicHelper is a proven alternative to C-BIT. Importantly, while TicHelper was designed by the originator of C-BIT, it has not been empirically proven as an acceptable or effective alternative to C-BIT, and certainly not of medication. Also, while not the emphasis of this story, NPR doesn’t address that most youth who are diagnosed with Tourette syndrome suffer frequent co-occurring conditions such as ADHD, OCD and anxiety disorders, which usually impart much more severe interference and toward which the bulk of treatment is usually directed, and where effective treatment of these conditions generally obviates the need to consider tic-reduction pharmacotherapy.

Below are resources useful to consumers and to professionals.

**RESOURCES ON TOURETTE SYNDROME:**[Tourette Association of America](http://www.tsa-usa.org/) *World’s largest national organization for the education, research and advocacy regarding Tourette syndrome*[Washington/Oregon chapter of the Tourette Association of America](http://tsa-waor.org/) *Provides regional support, including lectures, socials, advocacy support and other*

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