

**SAMEN OP KOERS<sup>‡</sup>: A MULTICENTRE RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL OF A GROUP INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS AND THEIR PARENTS <sup>‡</sup> TOGETHER ON TRACK**

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**Background:** Children with a chronic disease are twice as likely to develop psychosocial problems as healthy children. A randomized controlled trial is conducted to investigate the effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioural based group intervention (called Samen op Koers) for children with different chronic illnesses and their parents. The intervention aims to improve emotional and social skills to adequately cope with the consequences of their disease.

**Methods:** Children were recruited from seven participating hospitals in the Netherlands, and randomized across three conditions: child intervention, parent and child intervention, and waiting list. The first year of inclusion resulted in 146 participants (12.9%,  $M_{age} = 12.15$ , range 8-18). Target sample size is 162. Outcomes will be evaluated at baseline, after 6 weeks of treatment and at a 6 and 12-month follow-up period.

**Results:** The first baseline data were analyzed and showed that:

- 1) children in the three RCT conditions did not differ (yet) on the study variables,
- 2) children had relatively high levels of psychosocial problems, which were unrelated to disease characteristics, but were related to child coping skills, perceived impact of the disease, and parenting stress,
- 3) parents, psychologists and children gave positive feedback and were enthusiastic about the content of Samen op Koers.

**Conclusion:** Results are expected in 2012. If proven effective, Samen op Koers will be made available to all medical centres. The ultimate goal is that all children will have access to an evidence based program that limits the mental health consequences of their disease.