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Identifying High And Low Users Of Mental Health Services In People With Schizophrenia.

Abstract

The Schizophrenia Care and Assessment Program (SCAP) is a prospective, multi-centre, observational study with centres in the US (2,400 patients), the UK (600 patients) and Australia (350 patients). The study was designed to assess a comprehensive set of health outcomes and the costs associated with routine health care over a three-year period. Three existing data collection systems have been utilised. These are: MEDICARE - the national health care funding system, which provides data on services provided by primary care and specialist physicians, diagnostic procedures and other medical services; PBS - the national pharmaceutical benefits scheme provides information on reimbursed medications supplied to patients; and PRISM (CMI), which captures data on services provided through the state funded public hospital system. These data are supplemented with information from the patients' medical records.

Data collected show that the majority of services were provided to patients via outpatient services through the public hospital system. Conversely, the majority of costs (76%) were due to inpatient hospitalisations and only a small proportion (4%) of costs was borne by MEDICARE and the PBS. The average direct medical cost of care measured over the first six months was AUD\$9500 per patient, and the amount reduced over the course of the study. There were a small number of subjects who had a disproportionately high level of service utilisation. This paper presents an analysis of high and low utilisation of mental health services for subgroups of patients based on demographic and clinical variables.

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