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Who Does What And When? The First Steps Towards Improving Data Quality In Routine Mental Health Outcome Measurement.

Abstract

The introduction of routine outcome measurement (ROM) to mental health services is a significant change in mental health delivery. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the opportunities for this information to be used for service development, continuity of care, collaboration between service providers, clinical reviews and consumer participation. However, issues of data quality present impediments to realising these opportunities. This paper will present data from 2400 collection occasions of routine outcome measures in the Illawarra as part of the Mental Health Outcomes and Assessment Tools (MH-OAT) initiative in NSW. Issues of data quality will be shown to be a considerable impediment to the ability of services to analyse data and use this information for consumer feedback, monitoring consumer change and service development activities. Reasons for poor data quality will be outlined including clinician training, appropriate infrastructure and the identification of service pathways and their relationship to the data collection protocol. In order to improve data quality, it is necessary to specify service pathways, information exchange and staff responsibilities. Practical strategies for overcoming the challenges of implementation and improvements to data quality will be outlined.

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