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## Assertive Community Treatment Within An Intensive Care Team.

### Abstract

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) is a model of mental health care designed as a means of providing continuity of community care for people with serious mental illnesses who would otherwise have a high risk of hospitalisation or disengagement with services. This model has been widely accepted overseas and international research shows it to be effective. Despite this support New Zealand has only two ACT teams (one of these is the South Auckland Health Intensive Community Treatment (SAHICT) team), and there is no local research to assess its applicability in this country. This gap in locally derived evidence on which to base practice was the impetus for our evaluation the SAHICT programme.

Phase One of our research involved collection and analysis of routine hospitalisation data for 174 SAHICT clients. The data indicated a significant reduction in the number and duration of hospital admissions for these clients following their entry into SAHICT.

Phase Two extended the study by collecting data on more variables, including housing stability, use of respite, forensic/criminal detainment, and an economic analysis of SAHICT. Phase Three is a planned prospective study following the progress of new SAHICT clients for two years and recording clinical and social outcome indicators.

The completed, current and planned phases of this study will increase knowledge about the applicability and benefits of ACT in New Zealand. I believe the findings will be of value to clinicians and consumers, and be of international interest as well as interest in NZ.

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