



Editorial Mental Health Services Research: Challenges and Contexts

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Editorial

Mental Health Services Research: Challenges and Contexts

Mental health services research focuses not only on understanding various aetiological factors contributing to mental illness and emotional distress, but also on pathways which patients take in seeking help. This journey is influenced by a number of factors, including previous experience, models of explanation, geographical and emotional accessibility of services, resources available, models of care available and acceptable, ability to form therapeutic adherence, age, educational status, economic and social status. Each of these factors, either singly in itself or in combination with other factors or those applicable to carers and family, will determine how, when and where help is sought. Therefore, to understand what mental health services deliver and what is acceptable to the patients and their families has to be a major part of understanding whether services are successful or not. Economic factors in delivery of care and cost-effectiveness of various therapeutic interventions are crucial in modern day medicine.

In the majority of countries around the globe a vast proportion of therapeutic interventions in mental illness and mental health problems are carried out at primary care level. However, most of the mental health services research appears to focus on

secondary care. Self-reporting of emotional distress and actual prevalence need to be measured accurately. Using cross-national experience can allow us to learn from each other and ensure that good clinical practice can spread easily and is also more acceptable.

In this issue on mental health services research we have an array of star authors with international reputations and experience. The aim is to inform, educate and learn. From primary care to secondary care in the UK and from Hong Kong, to the UK via Spain and the Netherlands, the authors have provided an image of state-of-the-art practice of psychiatry. We are grateful to our authors for delivering high quality papers within the short deadline offered.

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