



Welcome to issue 6 of the Australian Mental Health Outcomes and Classification Network Newsletter: Keeping you up to date with developments in Outcome Measurement in Australian Mental Health Services.

## TheMHS

The Mental Health Services Conference (TheMHS) was held this year at Broadbeach on the Gold Coast. The conference attracted over 1000 delegates.

## Preconference Workshop

A feature of the TheMHS conference has been a preconference workshop with a focus on outcome measurement. This preconference workshop has been running since 1998.

The workshop was chaired by Associate Professor Tom Trauer from St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, and the University of Melbourne.

Mr Tim Coombs from the Australian Mental Health Outcomes and Classification Network gave a presentation on the role of AMHOCN along with a glimpse of the information being submitted to AMHOCN from States and Territories. A key feature of this presentation was the need for services to make use of the information being

collected to ensure data quality.

Paul Napper, from Pathways Rehabilitation & Support Service Inc, in Geelong, Victoria presented on the introduction of routine outcome measurement in his non-Government organisation and the ability it gave Pathways to compare the acuity of consumers between different programs.



Dr Tom Callaly

Dr Tom Callaly, Director of Community & Mental Health, Barwon Health in Geelong, Victoria, presented information comparing the similarities and differences between ratings of consumers receiving services from both Pathways and Barwon services. Tom indicated that one of the positive service developments to come out of collecting this information has been increased communication between

service providers and continuity of care

Sarah Gordon, Mental Health Consultant, from Case Consulting Ltd, in New Zealand, presented some recent work undertaken in New Zealand to review consumer self report outcome measures. Sarah indicated that there is still a lot more work to do in the development of suitable measures from the consumer's perspective. Graham Mellsop, from South Auckland Clinical School, University of Auckland presented on the results of the New Zealand Casemix and Outcomes Study (NZ-CAOS). Copies of the study are available on the Mental Health Outcomes and Casemix Collection website [www.mhnooc.org](http://www.mhnooc.org)

Finally, Dr Maree Teesson, from the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre, and University of NSW, facilitated a discussion on issues in relation to the introduction of routine outcome measurement to mental health services.

## Conference Presentations

All discussion of outcome measurement didn't just stop with the preconference workshop.

There were a number of presentations throughout the

conference which explored outcome measurement in mental health including the use of those measures that make up the National Outcomes and Casemix Collection (NOCC).

Ms Veronica Spillane, Project Manager, Outcome Measurement in Victoria, Mr Paul Bolt, Service Manager, Southern Health Adult Mental Health and Associate Professor Tom Trauer presented a 1hr symposium on the **“Implementation of Outcome Measurement in Victoria”**. Veronica identified implementation as a significant change management process, requiring engagement of consumers, carers and clinicians, a review of business processes with organizations as well as IT infrastructure and design and commissioning of informative reports. A feature of Paul’s presentation was the need for service managers to engage clinical leaders in the implementation process along with the challenge of developing IT infrastructure and managing direct and batch outcomes information entry. Victoria adopted a “train the trainer” approach to training and over 700 clinicians were trained. Tom presented on the outcomes of a survey of those trainers. He found, wide variation in the amount of training subsequently delivered ranging from 1 to 10 hours, that co-training was popular and that trainers were concerned about a lack of time to train others, a lack of

generic training skills and a lack of IT infrastructure.

Joy Atkins and Kate Schlicht presented a paper entitled **“Optimising the use of Outcome Measures in the Community – Treatment of Mental Illness”**. Joy presented on the approach adopted by Southwest Healthcare to the implementation of routine outcome measurement. Joy indicated that in her service the approach has very much focused on integrating outcome measurement into standard clinical practice, particularly in relation to care planning. Joy outlined the research currently underway to examine the relationship between problems identified when rating the Health of the Nation Outcomes Scales (HoNOS) compared to the consumers needs identified as part of the community treatment plan and the actual clinical treatment provided. Joy made the point that although routine outcome measurement is mandatory, it is up to services to optimize their use through their approach to implementation and their ongoing evaluation of routine outcome measurement.

Gerard Byrne, Elaine Collins and Helen Siddle presented a 1hr symposium on **“Mental Health of Older People”**. This symposium gave an overview of the activities of the Royal Brisbane & Women’s Hospital (RBWH) Geriatric Psychiatry Outreach Service (GPOS). This service has been collecting a variety of clinical outcomes data since its inception in 1995.

This information has included the HoNOS at admission and discharge from the service. The collection of this information has enabled GPOS to compare admission and discharge HoNOS for consumers within different diagnostic groups. For example, in reviewing the group of patients having contact with this service and a diagnosis of dementia there have been highly significant reductions in HoNOS mean scores for items 1 (overactive, aggressive, disruptive and agitated behaviour), 6 (hallucinations/delusions) and 7 (depressed mood). These results providing some reassurance that GPOS patients are improving on several important dimensions between admission and discharge. A more detailed analysis of 329 patients has been submitted for publication.

### **Outcomes Expert Groups**

The Child and Adolescent Group met on November 8. The Adult Group met on the 22 of November and the Older Persons Group met on October 28. More information regarding the Outcomes Expert groups including membership can be found on the NOCC website ([www.mhnocc.org](http://www.mhnocc.org))

### **Feedback?**

Tim Coombs would like to hear feedback or suggestions for future AMHOCN newsletters.

**Newsletter compiled by Tim Coombs**