



WHAT IS THE PLACE OF GENERALISM IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN AUSTRALIA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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POLICY CONTEXT

According to the 2007 Australian National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, one in five Australians met the criteria for a mental health disorder in the previous 12-month period. Sixty percent of them who did not use services reported an unmet need. If mental health needs are to be met in Australia it would seem that generalists are likely to be a big part of the solution. In a stream 6 APHCRI systematic review published in 2007 we addressed the question: What is the Place of Generalism in Mental Health Care in Australia?

KEY FINDINGS

The development and agreement of multidisciplinary care pathways and protocols could form the basis on which non-GP generalists provide a broader range of care within primary health care settings.

GPs with a Special Interest in mental health can provide support to other generalist providers and may provide a local referral option. It is important however that they work in close collaboration with specialist services and that mechanisms are in place for developing, assessing and perhaps accrediting their skills.

OPTIONS TO IMPROVE LINKAGE AND EXCHANGE

- Academic appointments and roles for policy makers
- Longer term collaborations to address service gaps
- Master classes and clinical leadership courses for policy makers, researchers, managers and clinicians

POLICY OPTIONS

- Promoting the development of agreed multidisciplinary care pathways
- Consider training low intensity therapists
- Considering the possibility of developing a group of GPs with a special interest in mental health

METHODS

Systematic review and Travelling Fellowship to The Netherlands and the UK

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