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Conference abstract

The introduction and evaluation of telehealth into a mental health service

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Abstract

Introduction: This two-year project involves the introduction and evaluation of telehealth into a mental health service. Phase 1 of the project explores stakeholders' views on how telehealth in the form of video conferencing could be used to link-up inpatient and community services.

Aims and objectives: Identify issues regarding:

- Quality of care
- Length of inpatient stay
- Access, communication, and relationship between inpatient, CMHT staff, service-users, carers
- Unproductive staff time, travel time and cost
- Telehealth for therapeutic work

Methods: These were:

- Focus groups, interviews with: staff, service-users
- Literature review
- Piloting of video conferencing facilities

Results: The main findings were:

- Focus groups/interviews: (a) isolation of different teams; (b) communication, relationship between teams; (c) staff, service-users' views on telehealth
- Literature review: identified relevant articles from 2000 onwards on the effectiveness of telehealth in mental health services and guidelines on the uses of video conferencing.
- Utilising the findings of (i) and (ii) to make recommendation.
- Initial findings from the pilot will be presented

Conclusions: The combined findings from the focus groups and literature review have identified ways of introducing and evaluating telehealth to the service:

- Per site: 1 meeting room with 1 large screen for team activities (e.g. ward rounds).
- Per site: 1 dedicated computer with web-cam for quickly arranged, 1-1 calls (e.g. professional-professional, practice sharing).

Keywords

video conferencing, telemedicine, mental health, telecare
