

## SHORT REPORT

### PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH PSYCHIATRIC CASE MANAGEMENT IN SINGAPORE

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#### Abstract

***Objective:*** To assess patient satisfaction with psychiatric case management service provided at a tertiary psychiatric hospital in Singapore. ***Method:*** A prospective study, using the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ), on 100 patients who had received case management during their stay in the hospital. ***Results:*** The primary findings of the study revealed that 87% of the patients rated the service as good to excellent with the same percentage responding that overall, in the general sense, they were satisfied with the service received from the case managers. Also, 95% would recommend the programme to a friend who required similar help although only 74% responded that most or almost all of their needs were met. ***Conclusion:*** This study enabled case managers to understand their patients' needs and satisfaction with the service. They have used this information to improve and enhance their service delivery. *ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry, Vol.10 (2): July – Dec 2009: XX XX.*

***Keywords:*** Patient Satisfaction, Psychiatric Case Management, Singapore

#### Introduction

Case Management has been defined as 'a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's health needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost effective outcomes' [1]. It is essentially a coordinated and collaborative process on behalf of patients to obtain the services they need [2]. The goal is to empower the patient and to ensure their involvement in their care.

Essentially service provision is patient driven.

Mueser et al have divided the different models of case management into three broad types: standard case management (broken and clinical case management), rehabilitation oriented case management (strengths and rehabilitation models) and intensive comprehensive case management (Assertive Community Treatment and Intensive Case Management) models [3]. There are many studies from the West with strong evidence on the efficacy and cost-

effectiveness of psychiatric case management [4]. Findings have been similar amongst patients in the Institute of Mental Health/Woodbridge Hospital (IMH/WH) in Singapore who had psychiatric case management [5]. The brokerage model of case management is used in our setting.

Yet there are relatively fewer studies on patient satisfaction with case management services. Studies have shown that most patients were very satisfied with the services provided by their case managers [6]. This satisfaction also seems to continue over time [7]. Many were less satisfied with explanations about treatment and medication [8]. Huxley and Warner found that patients were also dissatisfied with increased referrals to other agencies [9].

The aim of this study was to assess patients' satisfaction on the psychiatric case management provided in IMH/WH a tertiary psychiatric hospital in Singapore. The service was started in late 2003 and staffs primarily with nursing background were trained to provide case management. Some of the staff also received training at overseas centres, which provided case management services.

## **Methods**

The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) was used in this study. This scale was developed at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) by Drs Clifford Attkisson and Daniel Larsen in collaboration with Drs William A Hargreaves, Maurice LeVois, Tuan Nguyen, Robert E Roberts and Bruce Stegner [10]. It is a self-report questionnaire with a 4-point Likert-type

scale widely used to measure global satisfaction with services received. IMH/WH obtained permission to use the copyright document. Although this tool has not been validated in Singapore, it has been extensively used in psychiatric research in IMH/WH since 2006.

The study was approved by the hospital's Clinical Research Committee and the Ethics Approval was from the National Healthcare Group's Domain Specific Review Board A. A hundred consecutive patients, receiving psychiatric case management in the acute adult psychiatric wards in the hospital, were invited to participate in this study. These were all the patients seen by the psychiatric case managers in a one month period. Consent was obtained and confidentiality and anonymity were preserved.

Demographic information was collected using a standard data collection form. Statistical analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 13.0 for Windows.

## **Results**

Of the 100 respondents, 40 were male and 60 females. Almost two-thirds were equally divided in the 31 to 40 (30 patients) and 41 to 50 age group (31 patients). 67 were Chinese, 18 Malay, 12 Indian and 3 belonged to the 'Other' group, somewhat closely following the population distribution of the country. Slightly more than half (56 patients) were single; 34 were married, 6 divorced/separated and 4 were widowed (Table I). The patient's diagnosis is shown in Table II. Total of 78% had at least one previous admission.

**Table 1: Demographic profile of study participants**

		Frequency (n= 100)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	40	40
	Female	60	60
Age	<20	3	3
	21-30	11	11
	31-40	30	30
	41-50	31	31
	51-60	9	9
	>60	16	16
Marital Status	Single	56	56
	Married	34	34
	Divorced	6	6
	Widowed	4	4
Ethnic Groups	Chinese	67	67
	Malay	18	18
	Indian	12	12
	Others	3	3

**Table II: Diagnosis of study participants.**

Diagnosis	Frequency (N = 100)
Acute Stress Reaction	1
Acute Psychosis	1
Schizophrenia	60
Schizoaffective Disorder	7
Delusional Disorder	2
Depression	10
Bipolar Disorder	3
OCD	1
Dementia	9
Personality Disorder	2
Substance Abuse	1
Epileptic Psychosis	3

**Findings from the CSQ**

Eighty seven percent of the patients found the quality of the case management service good (55%) and excellent (32%); 13% rated it as fair; 95% agreed they got the kind of

service they wanted. In terms of needs met, 75% reported that most (47%) and almost all (28%) of their needs were met. Twenty four percent reported that only a few of their needs were met and only 1 person reported that none of his/her needs were met; 95%

would recommend the case management service to a friend in need of similar help; 91% were mostly (62%) or very (29%) satisfied with the amount of help received; 95% felt the services received helped them to deal more effectively (helped somewhat (56%), helped a great deal (39%)) with their

problems (Table III).

Total of 89% were satisfied (58% mostly satisfied and 31% very satisfied) with the service received; 88% indicated they would seek help from the case managers again.

**Table 111: Study participants' response to case management service questionnaire**

	Variables	Score	Percentage (%)
1	How would you rate the kind of service you received?	good	87
2.	You received the kind of service you wanted.	yes	95
3	The programme has met your needs	yes	74
4	You would recommend a friend who needs similar help to the programme	yes	93
5	You are satisfied with the amount of help you have received	mostly satisfied	89
6	The service you received helped you to deal more effectively with your problem	yes/somewhat	95
7	Overall you are satisfied with the service you received	mostly satisfied	87
8	You would come back to our programme if you were to seek help again	yes/definitely yes	90

## Discussion

Research has demonstrated that case management can improve clients' and families' experience of psychiatric services [11]. The level of patient satisfaction with case management has been compared with standard services. A randomized controlled study by Cullen et al showed a higher level of satisfaction in the case management group than the control group [12]. Another study looked at user evaluation of case management [13]. All the respondents were positive about case management in particular the accessibility of their case managers.

In general the patients in this study showed high satisfaction with the case management services provided. The focused attention, needs assessment and care delivery and interpersonal processes could have contributed to this satisfaction. Similarly staff enthusiasm and motivation could have contributed to these high ratings. As it is cross-sectional in nature, this study also does not fully explore the continuity of care which is a hallmark of the case management service [14]. Despite the several other limitations such as an absence of a comparator group and pre and post-assessments, the study has contributed significantly towards the case managers'

understanding of their patients' needs. This study could be further enhanced by determining the impact of time-based interventions, actual contact time with case managers and duration of service, on satisfaction.

Nonetheless the findings have served as a buoyant for the case managers who have strived to improve and enhance the delivery of case management.

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