

94. The introduction of outcome management in Flanders

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Background & Aim: Only in last few years, Mental Health Services (MHS) as well as the government devote attention to outcome measures. In order to stimulate this, the Flemish Mental Health Association (VGG) was appointed by the Flemish Government to offer scientific support. This contribution focuses on the selection of outcome measures, highlights several implementation strategies and gives an overview of the lessons learned from these strategies and encountered problems.

Method: Firstly, a survey was made of outcome measures presently in use and a review was set up. Using the concept mapping method, aspects of psychiatric care that are considered to be important are investigated. Secondly, a set of outcome measures were selected and implemented in MHS.

Results: It is found that 'a respectful relationship between patient and professional' and 'goal of the treatment' are considered to be important aspects of psychiatric care. For these and other important aspects, 21 outcome measures are selected. Subsequently, seven MHS started with the implementation of one or more of these outcome measures. These outcome measures have utility in clinical practice. An interesting implementation strategy, for example, may be the link between outcome measures and individual care plan. Furthermore, outcome measures may also be used for self-evaluation or quality improvement projects.

Conclusion: Although the merits of the introduction of outcome management are sometimes questioned, the reactions are predominantly positive. However, more efforts are needed to incorporate outcome management in MHS in Flanders.