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Are professionals ready to measure treatment outcomes in Flanders?

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Background & Aim: Since 2006, care managers in community mental health centres and policy-makers have devoted attention to outcome management in Flanders. This contribution aims to answer two critical questions concerning the implementation of outcome tools in clinical practice: “Are professionals motivated to measure treatment outcomes?” and “Is there a feasible tool available to measure simultaneously several outcome areas?”

Method: The Clinicians Readiness for Measuring Outcomes Scales (CRMOS) aims to examine the extent to which professionals are motivated to measure treatment outcomes. The CRMOS, consisting of 20 items reflecting five stages of change, was adapted to the Flemish care context. Two-hundred community mental health professionals filled in the CRMOS. Construct validity was conducted using factor analysis and the internal consistency was determined using Cronbach’s alphas.

Results: The majority of professionals in community mental health centres consider applying outcome measures in their clinical practice. A minority rejects outcome measurements. Therefore, the web-based Tool for Outcome Management (TOM), consisting of 14 visual analogue scales, was developed to support professionals. The TOM aims to measure simultaneously four outcome areas: client’s symptomatology, functioning, satisfaction and working alliance. The feasibility, reliability and sensitivity to change are currently examined. In addition, a four-factor model is tested to reflect the four outcome areas.

Conclusion: Community mental health professionals respond predominantly positive to outcome management. This calls for further development of scientific sound and feasible web-based outcome tools.