

EQUITY Newsletter #6

ROUTINE OUTCOME MEASURES STUDY



Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) heralded a change for mental health services by placing emphasis on the collection of routine outcome measures session by session.

Outcome measures used in IAPT include questionnaires for symptoms of depression, anxiety and general impairment.

STUDY AIM

To investigate the administration and therapeutic use of routine outcome measures in step 2 (guided self-help) treatment delivered by telephone in IAPT services.

WHAT WE DID

We analysed 16 recordings of patient-practitioner interactions using outcome measures during the first two IAPT treatment sessions.

Recordings were obtained prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants were 11 patients and 11 psychological wellbeing practitioners (PWPs) from five IAPT services in England.

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The full published paper is available here:
<https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12400>

WHAT WE DID

- There was sometimes a lack of consistency in the wording used to administer the outcome measures to patients in treatment sessions, and the rationale given for using the measures.
- Patients' descriptions of experiences when answering specific outcome measures were sometimes disregarded or forgotten. Though PWPs often gave patients the opportunity to talk about their experiences since the last session, this was often disconnected from the administration of the outcome measures.
- There were sometimes missed opportunities to use total scores from outcome measures therapeutically. Scores were often used as standalone numbers, though there were some examples of PWPs exploring patients' explanations behind outcome scores.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

It may be beneficial to improve the therapeutic use of routine measures in treatment sessions. This may be achieved by:

- Facilitating a collaborative conversational approach when administering outcome measures
- Using the individual and total scores from outcome measures to inform treatment decisions and achieve a more personalised delivery of treatment
- Ensuring consistency in how the measures are introduced and administered.