

MNT 01-033 Mental Health QUERI Translation Plan to Improve Antipsychotic Treatment

Richard R. Owen Jr., MD

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System; No. Little Rock, AR

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BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

Mental Health QUERI's (MHQ) mission is to translate research findings into routine clinical practice. MHQ has found that antipsychotic prescribing often deviates from VHA guideline recommendations, and the current demonstration project in VISN 16 employs a multi-component intervention to improve medication management for patients with schizophrenia.

OBJECTIVE(S):

Performance of four "translation" facilities and four matched control facilities will be compared on two target measures: 1) the proportion of patients who receive guideline-concordant antipsychotic doses, and 2) the proportion of inpatients switched from conventional to newer antipsychotics. The expected impacts of our intervention include increased adherence to VHA schizophrenia guidelines, reduced practice variation, and improved patient outcomes. Previous research has suggested that guideline-concordant antipsychotic dose improves symptom outcomes.

METHODS:

Comparison and translation sites received the same package of educational and clinical tools-- medication management pocket cards, schizophrenia guidelines fact sheets, and patient activation materials. Translation sites are participating in a 9-month program of evidence-based behavioral-change strategies, including intensive support for implementation; site visits and focus groups for educational and motivational purposes; recruitment and training of opinion leaders; implementation of clinical reminders; and monthly feedback of performance measures derived from administrative pharmacy and services utilization data, supplemented by medical record reviews to obtain additional information about clinical appropriateness.

FINDINGS / RESULTS:

The intervention began very recently, and translation facilities have only received one month of post-baseline performance data. Baseline measures reflect facility-level variation in guideline-concordant dosing of antipsychotics (4-14% of patients with doses above the recommended range) and switching of inpatients to newer agents (18-73% of inpatients admitted on conventional agents switched to newer medications). While it is too soon in the project to draw conclusions from performance measures, qualitative assessment thus far indicates that translation facilities are using the clinical tools, discussing the performance reports, re-assessing patient populations currently treated primarily with conventional antipsychotics, and examining clinical appropriateness of higher doses.

While early in the intervention, we are demonstrating that systems of care in mental health can be influenced through a multi-component behavior-change intervention. Full assessment of the intervention will occur by February of FY02.

STATUS:

The project is ongoing.

IMPACT:

MH QUERI plans to fully evaluate the impact of the intervention and then modify the tools and the implementation strategy for future "roll-outs" of the protocol in 2 other VISNs, and then nationwide.

PUBLICATIONS: None at this time.