

ABSTRACT FROM THE STAR RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED (2009)

Title: Exploring physical health needs of service users with serious mental illness

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Background

Physical health disparities exist between those with and without serious mental illness (SMI). Those with SMI have a higher prevalence of cardio-vascular disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome and respiratory diseases. This burden of physical illness is amenable to reduction through integration between physical and mental health care.

Objectives

To describe how people with SMI currently use health services.

To understand the health behaviours of people with SMI and their views about their health and risks related to the treatment they receive.

Method

The study will employ a survey of people with SMI (n = 500) attending community mental health centres. Data will be collected through an interviewer-assisted questionnaire.

Outcomes

The primary outcome is to generate understanding that will inform better delivery of physical health services to people with SMI. We aim to improve the physical health outcomes of people with SMI through connection with primary healthcare support.