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Measuring client satisfaction in residential substance abuse services

Abstract

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Measuring client satisfaction in residential substance abuse services.

Individuals who are satisfied with their mental health care often experience better clinical outcomes in the long-term. Likewise, participants who are dissatisfied with services tend to demonstrate poorer mental health outcomes. While there are established methods to evaluate client satisfaction in mental health settings, there has been little consideration given to the implications of client satisfaction in substance abuse settings. This study sought to evaluate the utility of the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8) as a measure of general satisfaction within the substance abuse population, and examine the relationship between client satisfaction and other established outcome measures.

Participants were 1,378 residents from one of fourteen medium to long-term residential substance abuse facilities located across multiple Australian states. Participants completed the CSQ-8, along with other measures of outcome (e.g. symptom distress, cravings, recovery process). Satisfaction was found to be associated with length of time in treatment but not with client descriptive characteristics. Significant associations were found between satisfaction and process measures, particularly functioning and perceptions of self.

These findings support the use of the CSQ-8 in residential substance abuse settings and in identifying populations at risk of poor experiences. This research has implications for the improvement of substance abuse services, particularly as part of quality improvement initiatives. The current study provides a framework for future research to explore the relationship between client satisfaction and improved client functioning and self-perception.