

The Wales Mental Health in Primary Care

(WaMH in PC)

Bursaries 2003

Name of Applicants: Neil Frude

Subject: The Cardiff Book Prescription Scheme

At any one time, around 1/6 of the adult population has a diagnosable psychological problem

And in 90% of cases, treatment is provided solely in the primary care setting

25% of all consultations in primary care have a significant mental health component

Two broad approaches to treating psychological distress, the pharmacological and the psychological (including counselling, psychotherapy)

Overall, the effectiveness of these two broad approaches is approximately the same But, typically, the help provided at PC level is exclusively pharmacological(although there has been a welcome growth of PC counselling provision)

Need for psychological therapy is reflected in patient surveys of preferred treatment mode, and is widely recognised in NSFs and various DoH documents

BUT - How could the enormous need be met within reasonable resource limits?

Answer: Through a scheme that facilitates the use of high quality self-help materials

There is a good evidence base for the effectiveness of 'bibliotherapy' and costs are low therefore cost-effectiveness is likely to be extremely high

Step 1: Survey of psychologists and PC counsellors – asked to identify books that they would recommend for mild to moderate MH problems commonly encountered in primary care.

Processed to form a list of 35 books covering depression, anxiety, social phobia, panic, anger, stress, low self-esteem, eating disorders, obsessional-compulsive problems, compulsive gambling, and the aftermath of sexual abuse

Most of the books present a structured CBT approach, offering complete step-by-step treatment programmes with exercises, self-assessments, diary sheets, etc.

Many are self-help adaptations of clinical treatments of proven effectiveness

Step 2:

Cardiff public library service approached. Agreed to stock copies of each book in each branch, and to accept paper-based book prescriptions from GPs and others

Step 3: Funding

Cardiff LHG funded printing costs

Cardiff Local Authority bought the books

Total cost < £10K

Step 4: Project launch (March 2003)

'Prescriber Packs' issued to every GP and to every primary care counsellor in the city (also, following requests, from some psychiatrists, CPNs etc).

Step 5: Scheme Promotion & Monitoring

In the first 6 months of the scheme some 1600 book prescriptions were dispensed.

The scheme has attracted wide interest. Coverage in BMJ, Pulse, GP, and Doctor as well as some radio, TV and newspapers. Also mentioned in House of Commons and now being considered by DoH

We receive requests for information almost daily, and the BMJ received so many requests for the book list that they asked for permission to put it on their website – which we agreed to

Evaluation of the scheme will be conducted early in 2004, largely thanks to bursary funding from [RCGP Wales](#) with [Wyeth](#)

Possibilities for expansion

I Geographically

II To other mental health specialties

III To aspects of physical health (similar 'cascading the expertise' on excellent self-help resources from secondary to primary care

To contact Professor Frude directly simply email [neil frude](mailto:neil.frude) and we'll do our best to help.