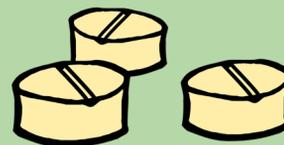


Thinking Outside of The Box

The Impact of Substance Use on an East London Inpatient Forensic Mental Health Service

East London
NHS Foundation Trust

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STUDY AIMS

Substance misuse is a significant problem among Forensic Psychiatry service users. This Quality Improvement (QI) Project forms part of an ELFT trust-wide QI initiative designed to:

- Understand the impact of substance use (SU) on the inpatient forensic unit at John Howard Centre in East London
- Develop strategies to improve the care and wellbeing of patients and staff
- Engage patients and staff to understand current attitudes and beliefs towards SU
- Improve the knowledge and confidence in the management of SU
- Reduce related acts of aggression and violence towards others, morbidity and mortality

RESULTS

SERVICE USERS

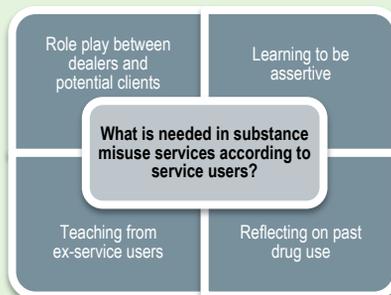
- Main reasons for drug use are curiosity, escapism, stress relief as well as pure enjoyment and fun.
- Factors contributing to drug use are easy access to substances, peer pressure, unawareness of mental health services as well as lack of knowledge about the long-term effects of drugs like cannabis.

STAFF

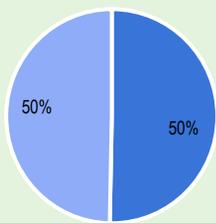
- Effective practices for drug use within the centre include collaborative work between wards, routine and reactive drugs screens, keeping service users entertained, awareness of triggers and susceptibility of service users to drug use, awareness of vulnerable moments, non-judgmental and objective approach to reporting drug-related incidents

BACKGROUND

The service had experienced at least one death related to SU and a number of incidents impacting on the physical and mental health wellbeing of patients and staff, some requiring transfer to the local general hospital. Routes of supply of illicit substances into the service generated concern, as well as access to reliable testing techniques to identify substances used. Innovative solutions to address these issues have become a priority.

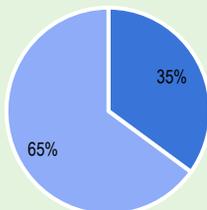


Patients with substance misuse at index offence



■ Yes ■ No

Patients with substance misuse at index offence who engaged in substance misuse therapy



■ Yes ■ No

METHODS

Three-step approach to data collection:

1. Retrospective data collection from the **electronic medical records** to provide baseline data
2. Structured **interviews with service users** using 13-items questionnaire to explore their views on available substance misuse services
3. **Focus groups with staff** to investigate their opinions on current substance misuse situation within the centre and how it could be improved

How could the services be improve according to staff?

Non-compulsory casual, peer-based discussion groups that are confidential and off-record

Attitude and culture change to ensure safe environment for reporting drug related concerns

Involving family/carers in substance misuse services

More thorough searches to prevent drugs being brought into the centre

Teaching from ex-service users who are now in community

Regular follow up after completed substance misuse course

CONCLUSIONS

A more collaborative approach with staff and patients where individuals needs and opinions are actively listened to and reflected upon, will lead to a more positive and engaging culture focused on improvement and safety.

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