

# Audit of Referral Process in a tertiary Psychotherapy Service

Dr Ioannis Papadopoulos

Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

## Introduction

Gaskell House is a tertiary psychotherapy service which helps people who present with complex difficulties who have not been able to benefit from symptom-focused interventions. Referrals received by the service get assessed by senior psychotherapists. The volume of the referrals has been rising which increases the pressure on an already busy service as well as increasing the assessor's workload

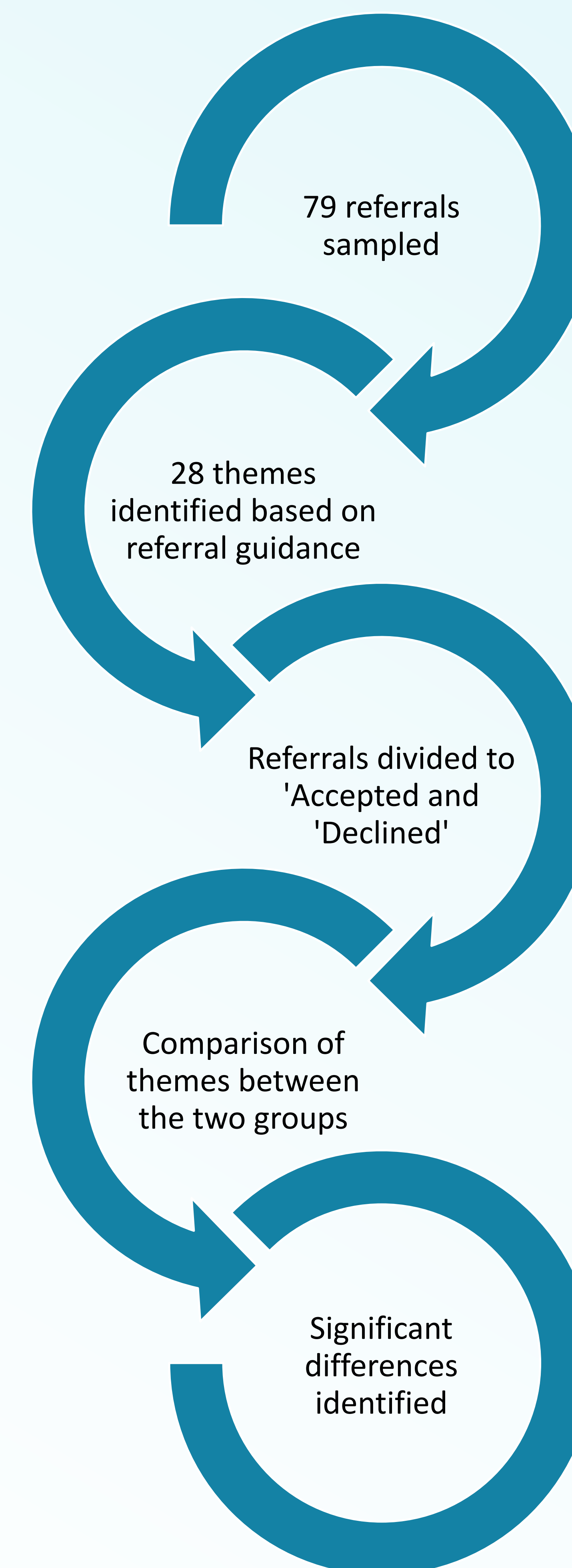
## Aim

This audit aims to identify:

- which criteria or parts of the referring guidance often get overlooked by referrers
- understand which of the current criteria may not be as helpful in identifying possible appropriate referrals.
- check if assessors are documenting the outcome of the referrals clearly on progress notes and if they communicate the outcome of the referral to the referrer.

## Methodology

This audit examined 79 referrals from September to October 2020 to understand if the guidance and criteria for referrers are being followed based on the 'Manchester Specialist Psychotherapy Service Guidance for Referrers' document. Based on referral criteria in the document and other clinically-pertinent information, 28 categories were identified and included: Diagnosis, Risk, Patient's Motivation, Patient's Goals, Patient able to attend, Previous therapies, Patient had 2 or more therapies in the past, Patient Had Interpersonal issues, Patient is reflective, Support Network, Presence of Psychotic Symptoms, Previous Forensic History, Substance misuse, Significant Social Issues. The data was subsequently divided into 'Accepted' and 'Declined' referrals and a comparison was carried out between them to find out if there were significant differences in specific categories.



## Results

51% Referrals Accepted, 47% Declined, 2% Unclear. 30% of referrals were re-referrals. 20% of Accepted referrals failed to opt-in. Patients were 66% Female, 34% Male with Mean Age 33. Majority of referrals came from CMHTs (35%), followed by GPs (29%) and IAPT (22%). The referrer was not a significant factor in determining if a referral would be accepted. Most Accepted referrals had interpersonal difficulties as their main problem. Half of the Accepted referrals did not mention alcohol and substance use, whereas one third of Declined referrals was due to current alcohol and substance use. Another third of Declined referrals had significant social issues including mobility issues and needing assistance with ADLs. Almost 40% of Declined referrals were re-directed to other services, mostly IAPT.

## Recommendations

Need for clear criteria around accepting people with alcohol or substance misuse, as well as a clear section for substance misuse history on the referral form

Education of local referring agents around the services we provide and therapies we offer

Explore the possibility of offering online therapy to patient that cannot access the service due to mobility issues