



MEASURING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF SOUTH AFRICAN SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT SERVICES: THE SERVICE QUALITY MEASURES (SQM) PROJECT

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Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter. 2009 was a busy year and 2010 will see the pilot phase of the project take place!

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING: AUGUST 2009

The second steering committee meeting was held in Paarl, Cape Town, on 3 and 4 August 2009. We would like to welcome new members to the steering committee: Prof Rajen Govender (Independent Consultant) and Prof Ashraf Kagee (University of Stellenbosch).

The purpose of this meeting was to further refine the proposed client/consumer survey of perceptions of care in an effort to prepare for pilot-testing the revised survey. During this meeting, the steering committee heard about the progress that the consumer survey workgroup had made on developing a survey of consumer perceptions of treatment. In addition, the steering committee:

- Reached consensus on a core set of domains for which indicators will be developed to measure consumers' perceptions of service quality.
- Agreed that the service quality measures used should be generic and not specific to a particular type of substance abuse treatment service. In other words, they should be useful to the full range of substance abuse treatment services (irrespective of setting or intensity of care

provided).

- Discussed the importance of considering interprovincial differences in the ways in which services are organised, particularly for the implementation phase.
- Discussed the design and implementation of the pilot phase.
- Reiterated the importance of connecting with policymakers and service planners to foster support for the process and enable adoption of these services measures when tested and finalised.

During this meeting, an additional workgroup, the Administrative Data workgroup, was established. The purpose of this workgroup is to identify specific indicators for each domain on which administrative data from treatment programmes can be routinely collected. This workgroup comprises individuals from the steering committee, US project consultants and

members of the MRC project team who act as the secretariat.

Feedback from the Consumer Survey Workgroup

This workgroup has held regular bimonthly teleconferences since the steering committee meeting. Modular survey items were formulated and revised making the survey appropriate for use in South Africa. New items have been added to the original US-based modular survey where needed. These items alongside the adapted and revised items will undergo cognitive testing where their relevance and appropriateness for the South African context will be established. The workgroup is in the process of finalising the items (which



Figure 1: Dr Myers (MRC) presenting on the objectives of the SQM project

will be presented at our next steering committee meeting) and thereafter the survey will be ready for cognitive testing and for piloting.

Administrative Data Workgroup

Administrative measures are defined as “data collected for usual operations of a programme”. This data is collected for:

1. Programme management reasons.
2. Reporting requirements.
3. Accountability.

Types of administrative data:

1. Data on the type of programme and services delivered.
2. Organisational structure – e.g. legal requirements, number of sites, who manages the facility.
3. Staff characteristics – e.g. number of full and part-time employees, number of contract / permanent employees.
4. Financial information – e.g. cost of running programme, operational expenses.
5. Client characteristics – e.g. number of clients, length of stay, treatment characteristics, client demographics.

The workgroup is in the process of producing a glossary and defining the indicators that will be used to collect administrative data. This draft list of indicators and their specification will be presented for discussion at our next steering committee meeting.

As a result of discussions, we have produced the following materials and resources (thank you for your valuable input!):

- Executive Brief: *Service Quality Measures Initiative: Improving Substance Abuse Treatment in South Africa*
- Project Brochure: *Improving Substance Abuse Treatment Services in South Africa: The service quality measures (SQM) project*
- SQM Project Web Site: <http://sqm.mrc.ac.za/>

The executive brief and project brochure may be downloaded from the web site. Please contact us for hard copies (details below).

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SQM WEB SITE

We are happy to announce the launch of the SQM project web site – please take a look when you have a chance and let us know what you think!

The site can be viewed at: <http://sqm.mrc.ac.za/>

GLOSSARY

Output – A measurable result of an activity or programme.

Example 1: The number of clients receiving VCT (voluntary counselling and testing) services and the number of bed-days of inpatient services provided.

Example 2: The percentage growth (improvement) in psychosocial functioning of patients over the period of treatment measured against a standardised questionnaire.

Impact - The effect or influence of an activity or programme on the participants or participating organisations.

Example: The reduction in the incidence of HIV+ cases transmitted through shared needles as a result of providing VCT services to injection drug users.

Interventions - Inputs into a programme to improve service quality, such as resources, money, or training.

Example: To improve access to VCT services, counsellors at one substance abuse programme receive accredited training on how to deliver VCT services and the organisation is given funding to implement this service.

Save the date:

The next steering committee meeting is planned for 22-23 April 2010 – looking forward to seeing you there.

Members: Consumer Survey Workgroup

Ray Eberlein	Central Drug Authority
David Fourie (Chairperson)	SANCA: Western Cape
Grant Jardine	Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre
Cecilia Maphai	Department of Health
Debbie van Stade	Department of Social Development

Members: Administrative Data Workgroup

Carol du Toit	SANCA: KwaZulu-Natal
Ray Eberlein	Central Drug Authority
Ashraf Kagee	University of Stellenbosch
Mogotsi Kalaeamodimo	Department of Health
Crick Lund (Chairperson)	University of Cape Town
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