Management by geographical area or management specialised by disorder? A mixed-methods evaluation of the effects of an organisational intervention on secondary mental health care for common mental disorder

Alex D Tulloch,1* Bryony Soper,2 Anke Görzig,1 Sophie Pettit,1 Leonardo Koeser,1 Catherine Polling,3 Andrew Watson,1 Mizanur Khondoker,1 Diana Rose,1 Paul McCrone,1 André Tylee1 and Graham Thornicroft1

1Health Services and Population Research Department, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, London, UK
2Health Economics Research Group, Brunel University London, Uxbridge, UK
3Department of Psychological Medicine, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, London, UK

*Corresponding author

Declared competing interests of authors: Alex D Tulloch and Graham Thornicroft are employed part-time as consultant psychiatrists for South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. André Tylee was a director of the Mood Anxiety and Personality Clinical Academic Group and honorary consultant at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust until October 2014. Catherine Polling has worked as a psychiatrist for South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust since 2014. This included salary support for Alex D Tulloch, Anke Görzig, Sophie Pettit, Leonardo Koeser and Andrew Watson and fees paid on a self-employed basis to BS. Additionally, this study represents independent research part funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centre at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and King’s College London, which maintained the infrastructure used and provided salary support for Alex D Tulloch, Catherine Polling and Mizanur Khondoker. Alex D Tulloch, Diana Rose and Graham Thornicroft are currently supported by NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care South London at King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.
Plain English summary

Evaluation of an organisational intervention on mental health care
Health Services and Delivery Research 2016; Vol. 4: No. 9
DOI: 10.3310/hsdr04090

NIHR Journals Library www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk
Plain English summary

In 2009 South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) decided to reorganise its services. Separate directorates that had provided mental health care to adults living in each of four London boroughs were replaced by a set of Clinical Academic Groups (CAGs) that worked across boroughs and divided the work between them according to the similarity of patient problems and needs, rather than where patients live. We used interviews with patients and staff and data in electronic patient records to investigate this reorganisation, looking especially at depression, anxiety and personality disorders.

Patients were unclear about the changes and their consequences. Staff were more positive and described a radical reorganisation that identified services that were not covering their costs, reassigned patients to restructured clinical teams and achieved financial stability. The restructuring was supported by the development of ‘care pathways’, originally conceived as a way of standardising care for particular illnesses or problems, but used by SLaM as ‘high-level’ representations of how teams should work.

Broadly, we found that services were now seeing fewer patients. It seemed that CAGs had not changed how effective or safe treatment was. There were mixed effects on waiting times. Just looking at community mental health teams, there was no clear evidence that costs had altered, although significant cost savings had been made in some of the CAGs’ specialist services. Our main conclusion for SLaM was that more work is needed to address those aspects of quality of care that the use of ‘high-level’ pathways left unexamined.
Health Services and Delivery Research

ISSN 2050-4349 (Print)
ISSN 2050-4357 (Online)

This journal is a member of and subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (www.publicationethics.org/).

Editorial contact: nihredit@southampton.ac.uk

The full HS&DR archive is freely available to view online at www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/hsdr. Print-on-demand copies can be purchased from the report pages of the NIHR Journals Library website: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Criteria for inclusion in the Health Services and Delivery Research journal

Reports are published in Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) if (1) they have resulted from work for the HS&DR programme or programmes which preceded the HS&DR programme, and (2) they are of a sufficiently high scientific quality as assessed by the reviewers and editors.

HS&DR programme

The Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), was established to fund a broad range of research. It combines the strengths and contributions of two previous NIHR research programmes: the Health Services Research (HSR) programme and the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme, which were merged in January 2012.

The HS&DR programme aims to produce rigorous and relevant evidence on the quality, access and organisation of health services including costs and outcomes, as well as research on implementation. The programme will enhance the strategic focus on research that matters to the NHS and is keen to support ambitious evaluative research to improve health services.

For more information about the HS&DR programme please visit the website: http://www.nets.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/hsdr

This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HS&DR programme or one of its preceding programmes as project number 11/1015/20. The contractual start date was in April 2012. The final report began editorial review in January 2015 and was accepted for publication in September 2015. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HS&DR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors’ report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HS&DR programme or the Department of Health. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HS&DR programme or the Department of Health.

© Queen’s Printer and Controller of HMSO 2016. This work was produced by Tulloch et al. under the terms of a commissioning contract issued by the Secretary of State for Health. This issue may be freely reproduced for the purposes of private research and study and extracts (or indeed, the full report) may be included in professional journals provided that suitable acknowledgement is made and the reproduction is not associated with any form of advertising. Applications for commercial reproduction should be addressed to: NIHR Journals Library, National Institute for Health Research, Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre, Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton SO16 7NS, UK.

Published by the NIHR Journals Library (www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk), produced by Prepress Projects Ltd, Perth, Scotland (www.prepress-projects.co.uk).
Health Services and Delivery Research Editor-in-Chief

Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone  Professor of Health Services and Implementation Research, Bangor University, UK

NIHR Journals Library Editor-in-Chief

Professor Tom Walley  Director, NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies and Director of the HTA Programme, UK

NIHR Journals Library Editors

Professor Ken Stein  Chair of HTA Editorial Board and Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

Professor Andree Le May  Chair of NIHR Journals Library Editorial Group (EME, HS&DR, PGfAR, PHR journals)

Dr Martin Ashton-Key  Consultant in Public Health Medicine/Consultant Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Professor Matthias Beck  Chair in Public Sector Management and Subject Leader (Management Group), Queen's University Management School, Queen's University Belfast, UK

Professor Aileen Clarke  Professor of Public Health and Health Services Research, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

Dr Tessa Crilly  Director, Crystal Blue Consulting Ltd, UK

Dr Peter Davidson  Director of NETSCC, HTA, UK

Ms Tara Lamont  Scientific Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Professor Elaine McColl  Director, Newcastle Clinical Trials Unit, Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle University, UK

Professor William McGuire  Professor of Child Health, Hull York Medical School, University of York, UK

Professor Geoffrey Meads  Professor of Health Sciences Research, Health and Wellbeing Research and Development Group, University of Winchester, UK

Professor John Norrie  Health Services Research Unit, University of Aberdeen, UK

Professor John Powell  Consultant Clinical Adviser, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), UK

Professor James Raftery  Professor of Health Technology Assessment, Wessex Institute, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton, UK

Dr Rob Riemsma  Reviews Manager, Kleijnen Systematic Reviews Ltd, UK

Professor Helen Roberts  Professor of Child Health Research, UCL Institute of Child Health, UK

Professor Jonathan Ross  Professor of Sexual Health and HIV, University Hospital Birmingham, UK

Professor Helen Snooks  Professor of Health Services Research, Institute of Life Science, College of Medicine, Swansea University, UK

Professor Jim Thornton  Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, UK

Please visit the website for a list of members of the NIHR Journals Library Board: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors

Editorial contact: nihredit@southampton.ac.uk