

# Patient involvement in improving the evidence base on mental health inpatient care: the PERCEIVE programme

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## Plain English summary

### The PERCEIVE programme

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## Plain English summary

This project set out to measure the therapeutic environment of NHS wards in mental health trusts and to see if this is affected by increasing ward activities or changing the way service users are admitted, and whether or not these changes affect costs. We created new ways of measuring the perceptions of service users and staff as well as a new economic scale to measure costs for individual service users.

We worked closely with service users and staff to design the questions that made up these new surveys and tested the questionnaires to ensure their reliability.

We hypothesised that the therapeutic environment of wards would improve by training nurses to deliver group activities. To test this, we ran a 4-year randomised controlled trial on 16 wards, comprising 1108 service users and 539 staff. Although activities did increase, we discovered only a significant improvement in the views of those service users who had been admitted under a legal section. There was no evidence that the introduction of training had any effect on staff even though their workload increased.

We also compared a model of admission called triage with traditional hospital admission to discover if it could affect the admission length or ward environment. In the triage system, patients remain on the ward for a maximum of 7 days and then are discharged or transferred to a longer-stay ward. We found no evidence that service user or staff perceptions differed between the two systems (triage and regular admission) or that cost-effectiveness was improved.

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