

Determinants of Youth & Parent Satisfaction in Usual Care Psychotherapy

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Background

- Demand to document outcomes has increased in the current fiscal healthcare environment (Hoagwood et al. 1996).
- Assessing client satisfaction is an inexpensive & efficient way to generate data on service quality (Lambert et al., 1999).
- Client satisfaction data are often used in policy & funding arenas (Garland et al., 2000; Lambert et al., 1999; Rosenblatt et al., 1998; Salzer, 1999).

Background

- Much ambiguity about the meaning of client satisfaction with youth mental health services.
- Equivocal evidence of relations with:
 - Improvements in clinical outcomes (Garland et al., 2003; Lambert et al., 1999)
 - Factors predetermined at entry into treatment (Garland et al., 2000)
 - Socio-demographic characteristics (Martin et al., 2000)

Background

- Methodological problems with existing literature include:
 - Poor measurement of client satisfaction
 - Examining parent & youth informants separately
 - Cross-sectional models

Goals of the Current Study

- Examine how much variation in client satisfaction is accounted for by:
 - change in clinical outcomes
 - factors predetermined at service entry
 - characteristics of the treatment itself
- Address methodological limitations of previous research

Participants

- 142 families of youths receiving publicly-funded outpatient mental health treatment in San Diego County
 - Subset of larger study of 170 participants
 - Families who had complete baseline data (except for Achenbach scales)
- 88 males and 54 females
- Ages 11 to 18 ($M = 13.5$, $SD = 2.0$)

Measures: Satisfaction

- Parent & youth report of client satisfaction (6-month follow-up)
 - **Multidimensional Adolescent Satisfaction Scale** (Garland et al., 2000)
 - **Client Satisfaction Questionnaire** (Larson et al., 1979)

Measures: Child Clinical Characteristics

- Parent & youth report of symptoms (baseline/6-month follow-up)
 - **Child Behavior Checklist** (Achenbach, 1991)
 - **Youth Self Report** (Achenbach, 1991)
- Parent & youth report of functional impairment (baseline/6-month follow-up)
 - **Vanderbilt Functioning Index** (Bickman et al., 1998)
- Clinician diagnosis at baseline
 - Any externalizing diagnosis
 - Any mood diagnosis
 - Any anxiety diagnosis

Measures: Service Entry Characteristics

- Youth age
- Youth gender
- Youth ethnicity (Caucasian vs. Other)
- Single vs. two-parent household
- Parent gender
- Family income

Measures: Parent/Family Characteristics

- Parent report of parental depression (baseline)
 - **Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale** (Radloff, 1977)
- Parent report of parental strain (baseline)
 - **Caregiver Strain Questionnaire** (Brannan et al., 1997)
- Parent & youth report of family relationship quality (baseline)
 - **Family Relationship Index** (Holahan & Moos, 1983)

Measures: Prior Service Experience/Service Expectations

- Parent & youth report of how helpful they expect therapy to be (baseline)
- Parent report of prior outpatient mental health service use in the past three months (baseline)

Measures: Psychotherapy Characteristics

- Clinician ethnicity (Caucasian vs. Other)
- Clinician gender
- Clinician status (trainee vs. staff)
- Clinician years of experience
- Number of visits (6-month follow-up)

Results: Zero-Order Correlations with Clinical Change Variables

Clinical Change Variable	Satisfaction-Youth	Satisfaction-Parent
CBCL Total – Parent	-.19	-.14
YSR Total – Youth	.07	-.11
VFI Total – Parent	-.20*	-.21*
VFI Total – Youth	-.17	-.31*

Results: Zero-Order Correlations with Intake Variables *Socio-Demographic Characteristics*

Socio-Demographic Variable	Satisfaction-Youth	Satisfaction-Parent
Youth Age	.13	-.10
Youth Gender	.09	-.13
Youth Ethnicity	-.20*	-.08
Single vs. 2-Parent HH	.10	.06
Parent Gender	-.16	-.01
Family Income	.00	.03

Results: Zero-Order Correlations with Intake Variables *Child Clinical Characteristics*

Child Clinical Variable	Satisfaction-Youth	Satisfaction-Parent
CBCL Total – Parent	-.10	-.01
YSR Total – Youth	.07	-.14
VFI Total – Parent	-.07	.11
VFI Total – Youth	.16	-.14
Externalizing Dx	.09	.11
Mood Dx	-.05	-.09
Anxiety Dx	.12	.05

Results: Zero-Order Correlations with Intake Variables *Parent/Family Characteristics*

Parent/Family Variable	Satisfaction-Youth	Satisfaction-Parent
Family Rel. – Parent	.02	-.01
Family Rel. – Youth	-.04	.07
Depression – Parent	.03	-.05
Strain – Parent	-.01	-.19*

Results: Zero-Order Correlations with Intake Variables *Service Expectations/Prior Service Experience*

Expectations/Prior Use Variable	Satisfaction-Youth	Satisfaction-Parent
Tx Expectations – Parent	.08	.07
Tx Expectations – Youth	.16	.00
Prior Outpatient Service Use	-.08	-.16

Results: Zero-Order Correlations with Therapy Variables

Therapy Characteristic Variable	Satisfaction-Youth	Satisfaction-Parent
Clinician Ethnicity	-.08	-.04
Clinician Gender	-.02	-.10
Clinician Status	.14	.12
Clinician Length of Exp	.24*	.07
Number of Sessions	.12	.18*

Results: Summary of Correlations

	Change in Clinical Outcome	Demos	Child Clinical	Parent/Family	Service Exper/Expect.	Therapy Char.
Youth Satisfaction	*	*	ns	ns	ns	*
Parent Satisfaction	*	ns	ns	*	ns	*

Results: Youth Satisfaction Regressed on Robust Predictors

Step	Predictor	β	R ² Change
1	Functional Impair.-P Difference	-.196	.045
2	Youth Ethnicity	-.189	.037
3	Clinician Length of Experience	.228	.052

Note. Model R² = .134; n = 142; all standardized regression coefficients and R² changes are significant at $p < .05$.

Results: Parent Satisfaction Regressed on Robust Predictors

Step	Predictor	β	R ² Change
1	Functional Impair.-P Diff	-.244	.095
	Functional Impair.-Y Diff	-.195	
2	Caregiver Strain at Intake	-.271	.064
3	Number of Visits	.169	.028

Note. Model R² = .187; n = 142; all standardized regression coefficients and R² changes are significant at $p < .05$.

Summary

- Clinical change, intake characteristics, & therapy characteristics all make significant contributions to parent & youth report of satisfaction.
- Approximately 13% of variance in youth report of satisfaction & 19% of variance in parent report of satisfaction is accounted for in this study.
- Satisfaction represents functional impairment changes, youth ethnicity, level of parental strain at intake, clinician length of experience, & number of visits.

Conclusions

- Satisfaction is associated with improvements in functional impairment.
- Satisfaction represents a complex set of factors.
- Much of the variance in satisfaction remains unexplained.

Limitations

- Lack of sample size to:
 - test more complex regression models
 - examine demographic differences (e.g., ethnicity) in the prediction of satisfaction
- Lack of data on other key variables that may relate to client satisfaction (e.g., working alliance, nature of therapy)

Implications

- Although often used as such by public & private behavioral health organizations, satisfaction ratings do not clearly serve as a “proxy” for change in a range of clinical outcomes.
- Much remains unknown about the construct of client satisfaction in youth mental health services.