Comparing Pre-, Post-, and Transitional-aged Clients in U.S. Outpatient Mental Health Services

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Background and Significance

- Lack national information on transition-aged youth
- Insufficient evidence-based for planning and policymaking

Research Aims

- To estimate the number and proportion of persons of pre-transition, transition, and post-transition age using mental health services in the U.S.
- To compare sociodemographic and clinical profiles of pre-transition, transition, and post-transition age persons
- To analyze factors associated with medication receipt among the three age groups

1997 Client/Patient Sample Survey (CPSS)

- Nationally representative survey of 1,599 inpatient, outpatient, and residential mental health programs across the United States
- Included medical records of persons of all ages

Sampling frame
1994 Inventory of Mental Health Organizations (IMHO)
Proportions of service use
U. S. Census Bureau, July 1, 1997

Study Sample

Selection Decisions
Under care population
Outpatient settings
Age groups

Transitional: 16-25 years old (N=620)
Pre-transitional: 6-15 years old (N= 1678)
Post-transitional: 26-35 years old (N=611)

Measures

Clinical characteristics
- Diagnosis
- Dual diagnosis
- Functioning (GAF)
- Suicidality

Non-clinical characteristics
- Age Group
- Gender
- Race-ethnicity
- Payment source
- Prior service use
- Psychotherapy
- Referral

Dependent variable
- Psychotropic Medication
Analytic Strategy

- Calculate proportions of service use across age groups
- Chi-square analyses to compare clinical and non-clinical differences across age groups
- Logistic regression models to examine correlates of medication receipt, with interactions
- Application of SUDAAN to adjust for standard errors

Number and Proportion of Young Persons Under Care in Outpatient Services in US by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>National Estimates (% of P)</th>
<th>Cases per 100,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-transition</td>
<td>305,171</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>180,201</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-transition</td>
<td>235,929</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Served</td>
<td>721,301</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do pre-, post, and transitional-aged persons differ in their clinical profiles?

All Different: Transitional Youth are Unique
Externalizing Diagnoses: proportion greater in older groups
Internalizing Diagnoses: proportion greater in younger groups

All Similar: Transitional Youth are Like Others
Dual diagnosis
Functioning (GAP)

Transitional More Like Post-transitional
Suicide

Transitional More Like Pre-transitional
None

How do pre-, post, and transitional-aged persons differ in their sociodemographic characteristics?

All Different: Transitional Youth are Unique

- Race
- Gender
- Income
- Education

All Similar: Transitional Youth are Like Others

- Income
- Education
- Employment
- Marital Status
- Employment Status

Transitional More Like Post-transitional

- Income
- Education
- Employment
- Marital Status
- Employment Status

Transitional More Like Pre-transitional

- Income
- Education
- Employment
- Marital Status
- Employment Status

How do pre-, post, and transitional-aged persons differ in their service characteristics?

All Different: Transitional Youth are Unique

- Service
- Access
- Utilization

All Similar: Transitional Youth are Like Others

- Access
- Utilization
- Satisfaction

Transitional More Like Post-transitional

- Service
- Access
- Utilization

Transitional More Like Pre-transitional

- Service
- Access
- Utilization

How do pre-, post, and transitional-aged clients differ in their receipt of medication?

% Medicated by Age (years)

- Pre-transition
- Transition
- Post-transition
19th Annual RTC Conference
Presented in Tampa, February 2006

**Analysis Strategy: Multivariate Relationships**

- **Model Building**
  - Model 1: Age Group
  - Model 2: Clinical Factors and Non-clinical Factors
  - Model 3: Interactions

**Multivariate Results**

- Factors associated with medication receipt:
  - Age group
  - Diagnostic type
  - Functioning (GAF)
  - Prior service use
  - Referral source
  - Age group X Diagnostic type

**Conclusions**

- **In the main**
  - Transition youth are unique in their clinical profiles, but look like post-transition clients in sociodemographics and service use.
  - Transition and pre-transition clients are equally likely to use medications.
  - But, controlling on other factors, transition clients are more likely to use medications than pre-transition clients when they have internalizing disorders.

**Study's Strengths and Limitations**

**Strengths**

- Samples from universe of U.S. mental health facilities
- Contains multiple clinical need indicators
- Large sample size creates statistical power enabling examination of interactions

**Limitations**

- Unknown reliability of medical record
- Changes may have occurred since 1997
- Underestimates numbers of clients in outpatient services

**Practical Programmatic Recommendations**

- Promote state-level policies that encourage seamless delivery of services for transition-aged youth
- Tailor services to specific clinical (and developmental) needs of transition youth