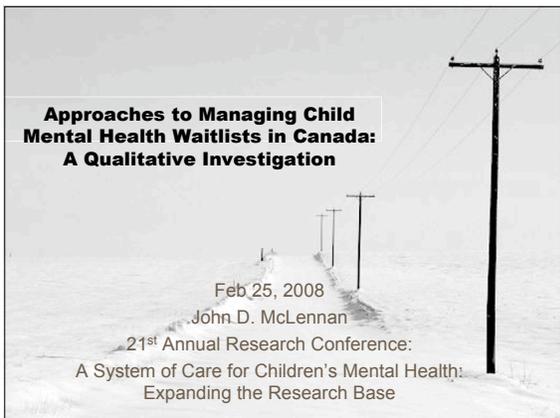


**Approaches to Managing Child Mental Health Waitlists in Canada:
A Qualitative Investigation**

Feb 25, 2008
John D. McLennan
21st Annual Research Conference:
A System of Care for Children's Mental Health:
Expanding the Research Base



Project 1 Team

- John D. McLennan – University of Calgary
- Charlotte Waddel – Simon Fraser University
- John Lavis – McMaster University
- Mary Perry – University of Calgary
- Karolina Kowalewski – student trainee
- Management Committee of the CIHR Team

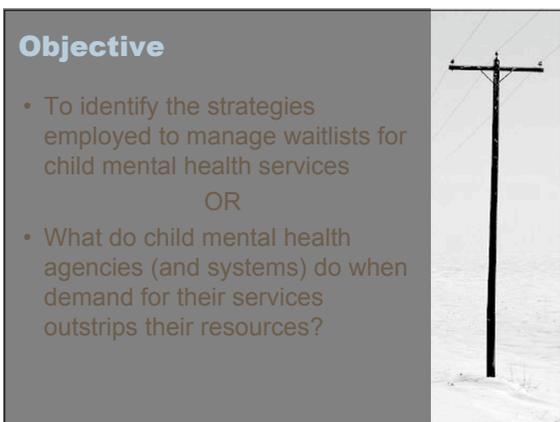


Objective

- To identify the strategies employed to manage waitlists for child mental health services

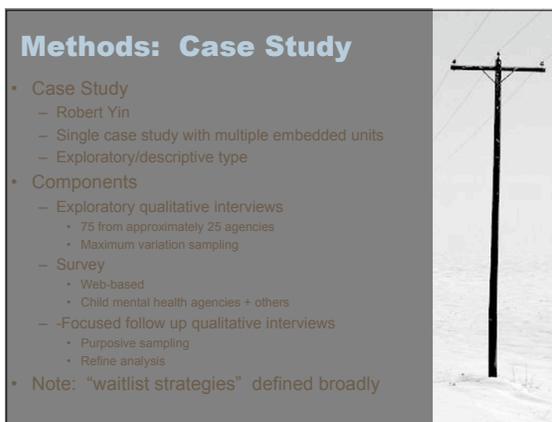
OR

- What do child mental health agencies (and systems) do when demand for their services outstrips their resources?



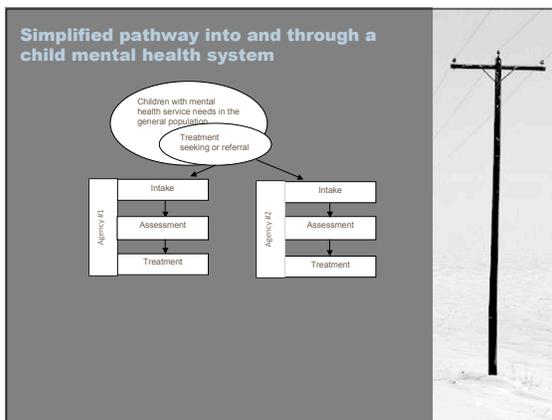
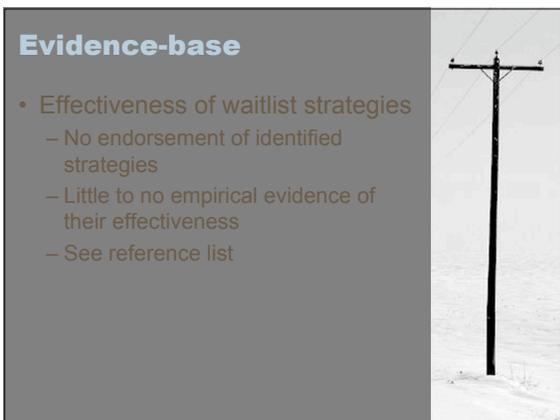
Methods: Case Study

- Case Study
 - Robert Yin
 - Single case study with multiple embedded units
 - Exploratory/descriptive type
- Components
 - Exploratory qualitative interviews
 - 75 from approximately 25 agencies
 - Maximum variation sampling
 - Survey
 - Web-based
 - Child mental health agencies + others
 - Focused follow up qualitative interviews
 - Purposive sampling
 - Refine analysis
- Note: "waitlist strategies" defined broadly

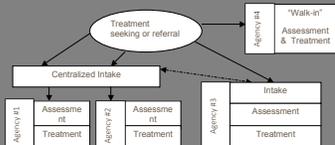


Evidence-base

- Effectiveness of waitlist strategies
 - No endorsement of identified strategies
 - Little to no empirical evidence of their effectiveness
 - See reference list



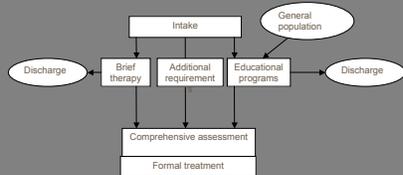
Strategies at the intake system level



Process strategies within the intake system

- Determine eligibility
 - Catchment area
 - Age criteria
 - Diagnosis and severity criteria
- Redirect away from agency
 - to other agency
 - to ER
- Prioritize (triage)

Strategies between intake & formal assessment/treatment



Strategies at the assessment level

- Increase the # of assessment slots:
 - Require more assessments/clinician-hour
 - Increase use of less expensive staff
 - Use multidisciplinary teams more efficiently
 - Provide more general versus specialist assessments

Strategies at the treatment level

- Increased treatment slot availability
 - Expand to non-traditional hours/places
- Restrict treatment
 - More time-limited/short-term therapies
 - Lower cost interventions
- Reconfigure treatment delivery
 - More group vs. individual therapy
 - Less expensive providers

References

- Westbrook D (1995) Patient and therapist views of different waiting list procedures. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy* 23: 169-175
- Stallard P, Sayers J (1998) An opt-in appointment system and brief therapy: perspectives on a waiting list initiative. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 3:199-212
- Wenning K, King S (1995) Parent orientation meetings to improve attendance and access at a child psychiatric clinic. *Psychiatric Services* 46: 831-8
- Smith D, Hadorn D, The Steering Committee of the Western Canada Waiting List Project (2002) Lining up for children's mental health services: a tool for prioritizing waiting lists. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 41: 367-376

21st Annual RTC Conference
Presented in Tampa, February 2008

