
How People in Crisis are Receiving Timely Mental Health Intervention

Initiative Type

Research

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Summary

Police as 'first responders' to incidents in the community are frequently required to attend to people with mental health problems who are in crisis. Through collaboration with Queensland Police Service

and support from Queensland Ambulance Service, West Moreton Health commenced the Mental Health Co-Responder Project (MH-CORE) in March 2017, to better meet the needs of people with mental health problems who are in crisis. [Janet Brack and Sgt Leon Margetts at the 2018 Clinical Excellence Showcase](#) from [Clinical Excellence Queensland](#) on [Vimeo](#). The project won in Pursuing Innovation Category and received the Overall Outstanding Achievement at the 2018 Queensland Health Awards for Excellence.

Key dates

Jan 2017

Jan 2018

Implementation sites

Ipswich Hospital

Partnerships

Queensland Police Service, Queensland Ambulance Service

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Aim

Employment of mental health staff ('co-responders') to work alongside police to provide onsite clinical interventions.

Benefits

- Improved inter-agency collaboration between police, health and ambulance services
- Perceptions of increased police capacity to manage mental health crisis situations
- More timely assessment and prevention of crisis situations.

Background

Internationally recognised research indicates that the approach taken by the police can have a profound impact on the outcomes for these people and their ability to access coordinated and timely mental health intervention.

Solutions Implemented

The initiative involves the employment of mental health staff ('co-responders') to work alongside police to provide onsite interventions based on the theory that a joint response better serves consumers, carers and the services involved. The initiative was designed to promote a new model of early intervention in mental health that builds on international evidence.

Evaluation and Results

An evaluation of the project has demonstrated significant benefits for all stakeholders involved and these include:

- There was an average response time of 19 minutes between contact of MH-CORE and their

arrival on the scene.

- Over 70 per cent of MH CORE contacts resulted in the individual remaining at home and not requiring assessment in the ED. This resulted in a significant reduction in use of involuntary assessment (Emergency Examination Assessments) It is highly probable that the majority of these would have been transported to the emergency department if MH CORE was not present.
- Of the 177 consumers that had contact with the MH-CORE Team, only 23 of these (13 per cent) presented to the emergency department within the 2 weeks following intervention with MH CORE.

As a result there was a significant reduction in the number of people requiring mental health assessments in emergency department.

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