

Article: 0221

Topic: FC06 - Free Communications 06: Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry, TeleMental Health, Classification, Education and Quality Management

A Systematic Review of the Predictors of Health Service Utilisation by Adults with Mental Disorders in the UK

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Abstract

Background

In developing a 'payment by results' system, it is important to make evidence-based decisions about which variables are important for resource allocation purposes when forming 'mental health clusters'.

Aims

To identify variables which predict health service utilisation (HSU) by adults with mental disorders in the UK, and to determine the evidence level for these predictors.

Method

A systematic review of peer-reviewed published studies.

Results

Taking into account study quality, 28 studies identified a range of variables with good preliminary evidence supporting their ability to predict HSU. These variables were comorbidity, personality disorder, age, neurotic symptoms, female gender, marital status, accessing a primary care psychological treatment service, non-white ethnicity, medication, high previous HSU, and activities of daily living.

Conclusions

These variables can inform decisions about which variables might be used to derive mental health clusters in payment by results systems in the UK. The findings support the need to investigate whether combining broad diagnoses with care pathways is an effective method for mental health clustering, and the need for research to further examine the association between mental health clusters and health service costs.

Declaration of interest

None.