



Workshop 6 – 2018 Nordic Implementation Conference

Beliefs, Attitudes and Understandings in Implementation

Presenters: Ursula Reichenpfader (Linköping University, Sweden); Yerko Rojas (National Board of Health and Welfare, Sweden); Renske van der Zwet (Netherlands Centre for Social Development, Netherlands); Victor Lushin (New York University, U.S.)

Presentation 1: Embedding medication review in routine hospital care – a practice-based account of tensions (Ursula Reichenpfader)

Background

Medication review, a systematic assessment of an individual patient's medicines by a healthcare professional, has been increasingly advocated as a measure to improve medication therapy and minimise medication-related harms. Although widely introduced in a range of health care settings, implementing and embedding of medication review in routine care has proven challenging

Project aim

The overall aim of the project is to understand how medication review is established as a working practice and how it is being integrated into routine hospital care. Particularly, we analyse how different healthcare practitioners involved in medication review at a surgical department understand the workability of medication review actions and engage in embedding it, as well as how practices are inter-professionally coordinated in the local implementation context.

Project methods

Within the context of a larger ethnographic study examining medication review practice after regional implementation, semi-structured interviews were conducted between March 2016 and January 2017 at a regional teaching hospital in Sweden. Embedded in fieldwork using participant observation, surgeon specialists, residents, and interns, as well as nurse practitioners, nurses, and pharmacists (n=17) were interviewed on hospital premises. An inductive interpretive approach was used.

Project results

Practitioners' understandings of medication review actions vis-à-vis other healthcare professionals and how they felt accountable for medication-related concerns varied between groups. Particularly interns' and residents', but also surgeon specialists' accounts of what they were actually doing were not aligned with what they thought they should be doing. Although participation of pharmacists in conducting medication review after admission was highly valued by all practitioners, practitioners were less confident of how actions were collectively organized and coordinated in routine work.

Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion

Practitioner buy-in with respect to meaning, uses and benefits of medication review after implementation differed between professional groups and shaped how they engaged in embedding the practice over time. Surfacing when embedding medication review and revealing potentially conflicting agendas were tensions around the appraisal of utility of the practice which entailed re-organizing inter-professional relationships as well as constant re-working of understandings of medication review.



Presentation 2: Evidence-based practice in practice - A survey of 815 managers in the Swedish social services (Yerko Rojas)

Background

There is a growing concern with "Evidence-based practice" (EBP) becoming a public relations gimmick, a window dressing, more than the intended process to improve social welfare services. Social workers and managers in Sweden are generally positive towards EBP. However, the rationale that lies beneath these positive attitudes and the understanding of EBP is believed to be rather superficial.

Project aim

This project sets out to explore the extent to which, both in a quantitative and a qualitative sense, social services agencies in Sweden use evidence based interventions (EBI). Of special interest is the question of whether there is a mismatch between reporting working in an evidence-based manner, and the disposition to articulate or correctly identify an EBI. We will also explore for specific variables associated with the use of EBI. Overall, empirical research devoted to different stakeholders' understanding of EBP in social work is scarce. In Sweden, EBP is often applied in the sense of EBI

Project methods

This project makes use of an electronic survey on EBP, targeted at a nationally representative random sample of front-line managers in social services agencies, conducted by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare. The survey was carried out in autumn 2016 and includes answers from 815 managers (response rate 82 %). The project focuses on one question in the survey: "to what extent do you use EBI in your unit?" ("to a large/some extent", "not at all", "don't know"), followed by a request to write them (EBI) down. The data is analysed through descriptive and multivariate statistics.

Project results

Qualitative data from interviews with 22 staff and social workers revealed that there was a great deal of confusion about the meaning of EBP and that EBP was conceptualized in a number of different ways. The most common responses conveyed the view that EBP is about using interventions for which there is scientific evidence that it is effective (EBPs). The interviews revealed a clear preference for the EBP process, as common concerns were that EBPs would restrict their professional autonomy and would prevent them from tailoring their response to the specific context and circumstances.

Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion

These findings have implications for the way in which organizations and the social work profession approach the implementation of EBP. Organizations attempting to implement EBP will need to improve both social workers' and staff's knowledge and understanding of EBP by providing them with a clear and consistent description of EBP that makes a clear distinction between EBPs and the EBP process.



Views and attitudes towards Evidence-based Practice in a Dutch social work organization (Renske van der Zwet)

Background

Although in many northern European countries Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is increasingly emphasized in social work, there is less agreement about what EBP means in practice and how it is best promoted. As the field of social work has struggled to define and implement the EBP process, it is not surprising that current use of EBP in social work practice is limited.

Project aim

This case-study focuses on how staff and social workers within a social work organization are making sense of EBP and examines their attitudes towards evidence-based practice. The study was carried out in a Dutch social work organization that recently committed to introducing an EBP approach. Research on how EBP is defined and viewed by social workers and staff in a social work organization that has recently started to strive for an EBP approach can be helpful in suggesting ways to improve implementation of the EBP process.

Project methods

The researcher conducted several visits to several office locations and attended and observed a staff meeting in order to better understand the organization. Qualitative data from interviews and written documents were gathered to build a picture of EBP implementation in the case study organization. In order to examine EBP across the whole organization, the researcher conducted interviews with social workers (n=12) and executive, management, research and specialist staff (n=10). A semi-structured question format of mostly open questions was developed for the in-depth interviews.

Project results

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Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion

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Presentation 4: Intent to implement evidence based assessment among soon-to-be psychotherapists (Victor Lushin)

Background

Evidence-based assessment (EBA) is a universally recommended practice of regular client evaluation and progress monitoring by means of psychometrically sound standardized measurement instruments. Disquietingly, the use of EBA among mental health providers is inconsistent, across service settings. A large proportion of mental health services are provided by Masters-level social workers.

Project aim

The present study examines malleable proximal determinants of implementing EBA among last-year students in the Masters degree program at the New York University Silver School of Social Work. Specific aims include exploration of the future therapists' positive and negative expectancies, normative beliefs, and self-efficacy in reference to the use of EBA in their envisioned workplace, and examining their intentions to implement EBA as a function of the above determinants. The ultimate goal is to identify high-impact intervention targets for strengthening the implementation of EBA.

Project methods

Behavioural beliefs regarding EBA implementation are examined using a reputable mixed-method elicitation approach recommended by Fishbein (2011), and little used in implementation science. Salient beliefs about using EBA are open-endedly elicited among future therapists, instead of relying on a ready-made battery of items whose salience to the respondents would be questionable. Content analysis and quantitative synthesis are performed. The impacts of each elicited belief type on the intentions to implement EBA are examined by collinearity-neutral relative importance analysis.

Project results

A large proportion of intent-to-implement variance is explained by a limited number of behavioural belief categories (including burden-surplus expectancies), as well as behaviour-specific self-efficacy. The study provides a number of promising targets for EBA implementation interventions targeting graduate students of mental health professions. The authors are open to sharing the detailed study protocol, and to partnering with international colleagues to replicate the present elicitation survey in multiple sites, and to jointly pilot-test resulting implementation interventions.

Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion

Mixed-methods elicitation methodology is a promising approach for implementation science, because open-endedly elicited behavioural beliefs are likely to more accurately reflect decision-making processes in the target population, compared to pre-conceived questionnaires. Our findings are likely to provide strong intervention targets. Testing across-site replicability of our findings through international collaboration is of considerable theoretical and practical interest.