



Continuity of Care in Children's Mental Health: A New Measure of Inter-sectorial Collaboration

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Abstract

A new measure, Continuity of Care in Children's Mental Health (C3MH), is presented. This measure captures collaborations between sectors from the parent's perspective. Parents completed the core measure and varying numbers completed seven optional modules for each sector contacted. The modules had good known-groups validity and there was evidence of convergent and discriminant validity.

Methods

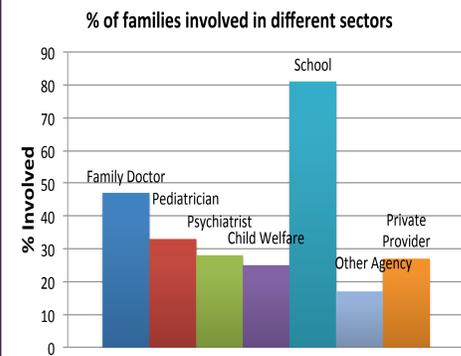
- Parents (N = 364) of children 4–18 years who had received help for their child's psychosocial problems from one of 13 children's mental health (CMH) agencies in Ontario participated.
- Parents completed the core C3MH (42 items) and seven optional modules (13 items each) based on whether or not they had contact with one of seven sectors/professionals in the previous 12 months.

Measure

Over the past 12 months, when I received help from [agency] and my FAMILY DOCTOR...

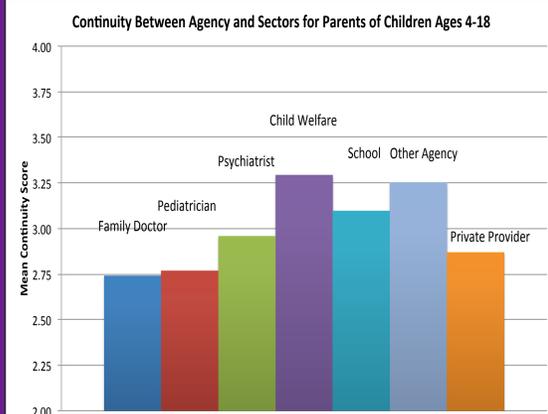
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| B63 | I wanted my family doctor to coordinate all the care my child received. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B64 | My family doctor went out of his/her way to help my family. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B65 | My family doctor helped me get services from other providers/agencies. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B66 | My family doctor gave me information that contradicted staff at [agency]. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B67 | My family doctor asked how my visits with [agency] were going. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Results



Most families were involved with the **school (81%)**, followed by the **family doctor (47%)**, a **pediatrician (33%)**, or a **psychiatrist (28%)**, in addition to the agency from which they were recruited.

The highest continuity was between the children's mental health agency and: 1) child welfare, 2) another agency, and 3) the school. The lowest continuity score was between the agency and 1) the family doctor and 2) the pediatrician.



| | Family Doctor | Pediatrician | Psychiatrist | Child Welfare | School | Private Provider | Other Agency |
|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------|------------------|--------------|
| Depression, Anxiety and Stress (DASS-21) | | | | | | | |
| Parental Depression | | | | | -.16* | | -.22** |
| Parental Anxiety | | | | | | | -.14* |
| Parental Stress | | | | | | | -.18* |
| Satisfaction (CSQ) | .68*** | .70*** | .62*** | .66*** | .84*** | .76*** | .72*** |
| Time in treatment | | | | | -.17* | | -.18* |
| Barriers | | | | | | | |
| Therapeutic Alliance (WAI) | .63*** | .70*** | .56*** | .69*** | .72*** | .85*** | .63*** |
| Child adjustment (BCFPI) | | | | | | | |
| Internalizing | | | | | | | |
| Externalizing | | | -.15* | | -.21** | -.20** | -.22** |
| Total Problem | | | -.14* | | -.16* | | -.22** |
| Child Impairment | | -.15* | -.16* | | -.21** | -.17** | -.21** |
| Impact on Family | -.17* | -.21** | -.21** | -.19** | -.30*** | -.27*** | -.30*** |

Reliability:
Cronbach's alpha: .91 - .95

Validity:
Positive associations between inter-sectorial continuity and satisfaction and therapeutic alliance;

Negative associations between inter-sectorial continuity and child adjustment measures

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Results

| Correlations Between Sector Modules for Parents and Clinicians | |
|--|--|
| Clinician Percentile Ratings | Parent C3MH Modules |
| | Family Doc Pediatrician Psychiatrist CAS School Other Agency |
| Family Doc | .48** |
| Pediatrician | |
| Psychiatrist | .47* .66* |
| CAS | .47* .54* |
| School | .48* |
| Other Agency | |

Discussion

- Most families involved with school, suggesting need for collaboration between CMH agencies and the education sector
- Lowest continuity with medical sector, suggesting need for improved collaboration
- Good evidence of validity across related concepts, and with clinician ratings
- Future research: Use of measure to evaluate system reform efforts (e.g., matched comparisons between sites that have implemented initiatives to improve continuity between sectors versus those that have not)

References
Tobon, J.I., Reid, G.J., Goffin, R. (2013). Continuity of care in children's mental health: Development of a measure. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*. DOI: 10.1007/s10488-013-0518-0