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INFORMATION ON OBTAINING THE VIEWS OF USERS OF COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICES

CONSUMER FEEDBACK RESOURCE

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INTRODUCTION

These information sheets will be of use to health service staff or Community Health Councils who wish to find out the views of users of community nursing services.

The purpose of these sheets is:

1 to give an overview of what has previously been carried out in this field

2 to give details of some of the current major projects

3 to list some organisations which may be able to carry out research

4 to provide a checklist of what appear to be the most important issues to users of community nursing services.

Information on the use of feedback methods is available separately and is also provided in full detail in:

McIver S. Obtaining the Views of Users of Health Services. London: King's Fund Centre, 1991.

Details of any type of consumer feedback project using survey or non-survey methods are welcomed by the Consumer Feedback Resource so that we can develop the advice on community nursing services. Please send the information to:

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Manager
Consumer Feedback Resource
King's Fund Centre
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London
NW1 7NF

Tel: 071-267 6111

July 1991

LITERATURE OVERVIEW OF CONSUMER FEEDBACK IN COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICES

The importance of obtaining the users' view of community nursing has been stressed in many reviews both to identify needs and to encourage participation, partnership and personal responsibility on the part of users. (1,2,3)

Following the implementation of the Cumberlege report in health authorities there have been many projects to develop quality assurance programmes. (4) However few of these projects have resulted in documented evidence of users' views.

General Surveys

Large surveys of the population have been undertaken to establish unmet need or document lifestyle or to ask users for their views of services. Some of these surveys have included questions about community nursing services (5,6) asking users how often they use services and whether they are satisfied with services. Satisfaction levels in these surveys have proved to be very high.

Health Visiting Services

There appear to be more surveys about users' views of health visiting services than of other community nursing services. Surveys to evaluate whether health visitors' objectives have been met by matching them against users' views include surveys by Watson and Sim (7) and Poulton. (8) The surveys assess what type of information users have received and whether it has been understood.

Other issues identified in surveys of health visitors are facilities, information and health visitors' attitudes. It was found that mothers with children under 5 years attending clinics have identified a need for the following facilities: pram parks, accessible premises, space to sit and talk comfortably to other mothers, refreshments, space for baby changing and breast feeding, creche provision and space for private conversations. (9,10) A need for more information booklets and parent held records has been reported and ease of contact with the health visitor. (9,10,11) Some surveys identified a need for more services for certain user groups such as Bengali mothers (7) or 0-1 year olds. (11) Many surveys have indicated that users are satisfied with services and find health visitors approachable and friendly.

Community Psychiatric Nursing Services

Much debate has centred on what the role of community psychiatric nursing services should be and on the need to involve users in evaluating the effectiveness of services received. (3) The few surveys that have been documented indicate that users are satisfied with services received. In particular users welcome the opportunity to discuss their problems with a nurse who has more time and is more approachable and friendly than a doctor or a psychiatrist. (12,13) Users have also found community psychiatric nurses make a difference to their state of health. In a study by Pearce and Wilson 36.2 per cent of users felt their symptoms had greatly improved whilst a further 57.4 per cent felt the symptoms were still present but manageable. (12) Other issues identified are whether families should be present at consultations or not (12) and whether users should be seen at home or not. (13)

An interesting methodological approach was adopted by Tiverton community mental health team. (14) By interviewing a group of users and carers they developed a list of needs users might want help with. They then used it as a questionnaire with a larger group of users. This helped the team to establish their priorities in caring for users and to identify users and carers who disagreed with each other and needed help in seeking a resolution.

District Nursing and School Nursing Services

Little documented evidence of users' views of district nursing and school nursing services has been identified. One study by Burman (10) found that there was a need for more information about the services, so carers and users could understand the role of these nurses better. A need for more information is identified in surveys of elderly users' experiences of community care. (21) It has been found that although district nurses spend a great deal of time with elderly people they do not always see the need to use the educational or counselling parts of their role with them.

Types of Clients

Some studies have documented the needs of different user groups. Ayers (15) interviewed 132 mothers with mentally handicapped children and found that existing community services substituted rather than reinforced mothers' caring capacity. Mothers needed more help in getting access to services for help with daily practical problems such as nappy services. The Cumberlege report on community nursing services has useful checklists of the needs of different user groups. (1) These checklists cover mothers-to-be and new parents, children 0-5 years, children 5-16 years, adolescents and young adults, well adults, acutely ill and terminally ill people, people who are chronically sick or physically disabled, people with mental health problems, people with mental handicaps and elderly people. A recent article in the Health Service Journal describes the needs of the homeless. (16) These include drop-in centres and healthcare workers with a specific brief to monitor the needs of homeless people.

Participation Methods

The development of neighbourhood nursing, as outlined in the Cumberlege report, present nursing teams with opportunities to develop methods of getting users' views which involve user participation. (1) One example of this approach is a health care association which has been set up in Carshalton. (20) The association involves professionals, voluntary organisations and user groups and aims include encouraging people to learn more about health and health resources, and seeking the views of the community via local health service users. One activity of the association has been a survey of people's attitudes to health checks to see if a well person clinic could be opened.

Edwards (19) describes the use of 'Change Days' where local professionals such as librarians are invited to discuss gaps in services and how to promote services. Haggard (17) has listed several alternatives to survey methods including patient/user groups, health service advisory groups, feedback surgeries and planned community consultation. In User Friendly Services Winn and Quick have set out guidelines for community managers considering involving users in planning services. (18)

References

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5. East Dorset Community Health Council. Survey 10,000. East Dorset Community Health Council, 1990.
6. Rogers S, Barr A. Focus on health care. Operational Research Unit, Oxford Regional Health Authority, 1989.
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9. East Dorset Community Health Council. A survey of health visiting services. East Dorset Community Health Council, 1987.
10. Burman D. The age of the NHS Consumer. Farnham, Fleet and Community Unit, 1991. Project for Diploma in Management Studies.
11. Weatherley D. A survey of clients' views in one health visitor's caseload. Health Visitor 1988 May:61;137-38.
12. Pearce I, Wilson I. Keeping the customer satisfied. Nursing Times 1987 Sep 23:35-37.
13. Oyerbode F. Community psychiatric nurses in primary care: consumer survey. Psychiatric Bulletin 1988;12: 483-485.
14. Orford J. Long-term mental health disability: going to the consumers to assess need in the community. Occupational Therapy 1986: 357-361.
15. Ayer S. Community care: failure of professionals to meet family needs. Child: care, health and development 1984;10:127-140.
16. Wall P. Health and homelessness. The Health Service Journal 1991 Apr 11:16-
17. Haggard L. What do the patients say? Health and Social Service Journal, 1985 Nov 7:140.
18. Winn L, Quick A. User Friendly Services. London: King's Fund Centre 1989.
19. Edwards C. Neighbourhood Networks. Nursing Times 1990 Jan 31:36-38.
20. Roberts P, Lee N. Help yourself to health. The Health Service Journal 1990 Aug 23:1249.
21. Cornwell J. The consumers' view: elderly people and community health services. London: King's Fund Centre, 1989.

Other Useful References

Hughes J (ed). Enhancing the quality of community nursing. London: King's Fund Centre, 1990.

CURRENT PROJECTS

These projects are ones that are funded to develop good practice in the field of consumer feedback or quality improvement in community nursing services.

Sue Jones
Locality Manager
South Sefton Health Authority
Magdalen Square
Netherton
Bootle
L30 5FP

Tel: 051-521 4000

Carers and users have been surveyed about their satisfaction with the District Nursing Services. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used.

Trish Everett
Department of Social Policy and Social Work
University of Birmingham
PO Box 363
Birmingham
B15 2TT

A publication is being written on users' views of health visiting services after collating and reviewing 50 studies of users' views.

Nancy Dennis
Primary Care Adviser
College of Health
St Margarets House
21 Old Ford Road
London
E2 9PL

Tel: 081-983 1225

A survey of users of community nurses is being undertaken to find out if giving tapes with discharge information improves the service received by users.

Professor C A Butterworth
Department of Nursing
University of Manchester
Stopford Building
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PT

Tel: 061-275 5333

An investigation is being undertaken of the use made by community nurses and their clients of a telephone consultation service. The research includes a survey of clients who use the service to find out their views and priorities.

Anne Allen
Information Officer
Community Unit
Primrose Lane
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire

Surveys of users' views of community nursing services are been undertaken to find out if the questionnaires could be used continuously as part of a quality assurance programme.

ORGANISATION CONTACT LIST

This is a list of organisations offering advice and assistance to those seeking to obtain information from users of community nursing services. This list is not comprehensive and inclusion does not imply endorsement by the King's Fund Centre.

College of Health
St Margarets House
21 Old Ford Road
London
E2 9PL

Tel: 081-981 6719

Social Policy and Social Work Department
The University of Birmingham
PO Box 363
Birmingham
B15 2TT

Tel: 021-414 5709

Cultural Partnerships Ltd
90 DeBeauvoir Road
London
N1

Tel: 071-254 8217

Department of Community Studies
Brighton Polytechnic
Lewes Road
Brighton
BN2 4AT

Tel: 0273-600900

Nuffield Institute for Health Services Studies
71-75 Clarendon Road
Leeds
LS2 9PL

Salutis Partnership
Health and Social Care Research and Training
14 Rednal Road
Kings Norton
Birmingham
B38 8DR

Tel: 021-458 4576

Social and Community Planning Research
35 Northampton Square
London
EC1V OAX

Tel: 071-250 1866

AREAS FOR QUESTIONS

This list contains suggestions for areas which could be covered in a survey to obtain the views of users of community nursing services. The list has been compiled from previous research into the views of community nursing service users but it is not intended to be exhaustive.

General Issues

Type of user

- Questions to find out the age, sex, area of residence of respondent and ethnic origin to assess the needs of different groups of people.

Staff attitude

- Do users feel able to ask community nurses all the questions they wish to ask?
- Can they understand any information given to them?
- Do community nurses reinforce or substitute the caring capacity of carers?

Organisation

- Do users receive a seamless service from the different professionals that care for them?
- Do users receive all the services that they need and that they are entitled to?
- Are as many services as possible provided in the community to prevent admission to hospital, e.g. for diabetic users?
- Are services fairly distributed in different areas?
- Is user participation encouraged, e.g. patient held records?

Information

- Do users receive the full range of information that they need from the community nurses?
- Do users receive enough information about the role of community nurses?
- Do users know how to get hold of nurses between appointments, e.g. information leaflets about the service offered?
- Are users given information about equipment and aids available to them?

Facilities

- Are shelters for prams and pushchairs provided at clinics?
- Are there baby changing rooms, refreshments and sufficient seating?
- Are there rooms for private conversations, creche facilities, car parking and public transport pick up points?

Methodological

- Questionnaires may be distributed at clinics or on home visits.
- Methods should be considered that involve users, e.g. consultation days where gaps in services are identified with local people.

School Nursing and District Nursing Issues

Information

- Do users and carers need more information about the role of school nurses and district nurses?

Health Visiting Issues

Staff attitude

- How easy do users find it to discuss problems with the health visitors that are not directly related to the child?

Organisation

- Are the needs of individual users met, e.g. do they receive enough visits?
- Are there any additional services users would like, e.g. postnatal groups, slimming clubs?

Information

- Do users understand the role of health visitors, e.g. that health visitors come to see the child?

Outcomes

- Do health visitors fulfill their role, e.g. as health educator or mother's friend?
- Do users benefit from the health visits?

Community Psychiatric Nursing Issues

Type of user

- Which groups in the population receive community psychiatric nursing services?
- Are they referred by general practitioners or consultants?
- Are there any groups not receiving the service that would benefit from it?

Staff attitude

- Do users find community psychiatric nurses easy to talk to?
- Do they feel their problems are understood?
- Do they have enough time to talk to the community psychiatric nurses?

Organisation

- Is liaison between community psychiatric nurses and other professionals organised effectively, particularly when dealing with elderly patients who receive services from a number of different professionals?

Facilities

- Where do users receive the service?
- If users receive services in a community mental health centre is it accessible?
- If users receive the service at home how do users feel about being visited at home?

Outcomes

- Do users benefit from seeing a community psychiatric nurse: are their symptoms more manageable; is referral to hospital reduced; do they benefit from having someone to talk to?

Carers

- Are carers involved in consultations?
- Are users happy for carers to be involved in consultations?
- Who is the focus of care – carer or user?

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The King's Fund Centre is a health services development agency which promotes improvements in health and social care. We do this by working with people in health services, in social services, in voluntary agencies, and with the users of their services. We encourage people to try out new ideas, provide financial or practical support to new developments, and enable experiences to be shared through workshops, conferences and publications. Our aim is to ensure that good developments in health and social care are widely taken up.