



Effective Health Care

Therapeutic Relationships and SMI Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- The topic, *Therapeutic Relationships and Serious Mental Illness (SMI)* is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.
- The topic could potentially be considered for new research in comparative effectiveness.

Topic Description

Nominator(s): Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in the impact of clinician variables, patient variables and their interaction (i.e., therapeutic alliance) on the effectiveness of interventions or treatment outcomes for adults with serious mental illness.

Staff-Generated PICO – 1

Population(s): Adult patients with serious mental illness (SMI), with or without co-occurring disorders such as chemical dependency

Intervention(s): Clinician variables as a facet of the psychotherapeutic and/or psychopharmacological intervention for SMI

Comparator(s): All other treatment variables/options

Outcome(s): Improved patient outcomes (e.g., quality of life, satisfaction with care, treatment adherence, decreased distressing symptoms or side effects), improved clinical techniques, optimal matching of patients to clinicians and treatment programs

Staff-Generated PICO – 2

Population(s): Adult patients with SMI, with or without co-occurring disorders such as chemical dependency

Intervention(s): Patient variables as a facet of the psychotherapeutic and/or psychopharmacological intervention for SMI

Comparator(s): All other treatment variables/options

Outcome(s): Improved patient outcomes (e.g., quality of life, satisfaction with care, treatment adherence, decreased distressing symptoms or side effects), improved clinical techniques, optimal matching of patients to clinicians and treatment programs

Staff-Generated PICO – 3

Population(s): Adult patients with SMI, with or without co-occurring disorders such as chemical dependency

Intervention(s): The interaction between clinician and patient variables as a facet of the psychotherapeutic and/or psychopharmacological intervention for SMI

Comparator(s): All other treatment variables/options

Outcome(s): Improved patient outcomes (e.g., quality of life, satisfaction with care, treatment adherence, decreased distressing symptoms or side effects), improved clinical techniques, optimal matching of patients to clinicians and treatment programs

**Key Questions
from Nominator:**

KQ1: For adults with SMI, what effect do clinician variables (as a facet of the psychotherapeutic and/or psychopharmacological intervention for SMI) have on therapeutic alliance and patient outcomes?

- Are there differential effects across different SMI categories?

KQ2: For adults with SMI, what effect do patient variables (as a facet of the psychotherapeutic and/or psychopharmacological intervention for SMI) have on therapeutic alliance and patient outcomes?

- Are there differential effects across different SMI categories?

KQ3: For adults with SMI, what effect does the therapeutic relationship/therapeutic alliance (TA; interaction between clinician and patient variables, as a facet of the psychotherapeutic and/or psychopharmacological intervention for SMI) have on patient outcomes?

- How does the effect of the TA compare to the effect of the mental health intervention itself?
- Are there differential effects across different SMI categories?
- Are there differential effects for psychotherapeutic versus psychopharmacological treatments?
- Are there differential effects across psychotherapeutic modalities of interventions (e.g., psychodynamic versus interpersonal psychotherapy versus cognitive-behavioral therapy)?

Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) defines serious mental illness (SMI) as a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder (excluding developmental and substance use disorders); diagnosable currently or within the past year; of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified within the 4th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV); resulting in serious functional impairment, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities. More specifically, SMI includes major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder.
- In addition to medication treatment, psychosocial treatment such as cognitive behavioral therapy and interpersonal therapy can also be components of a treatment plan. Clinician variables, patient variables, and their interaction (i.e., therapeutic alliance) can potentially account for a large variance in treatment outcomes. Accordingly, the role of the therapeutic relationship (i.e., therapeutic alliance) is important to consider across settings and types of treatment.

- However, there is only a limited body of evidence that addresses the effects of patient, clinician, and therapeutic relationship variables on patient outcomes in adults with SMI. Therefore, this topic is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.