

## Group Care for Mental Health Disorders: A Review

### Context

Mental health disorders affect 20% of Canadians in their lifetime. Most are treated individually in private appointments with various health care providers. Group medical visits is a new approach that has the potential to improve timeliness and efficiency of care for patients with mental health disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder.

### Technology

In group care, multiple patients are seen in the same clinical setting, at the same time, and care is provided by a multidisciplinary team. There is variability in the composition of the care team, but it may include a physician, specialist, nurse, dietitian, and educator. Patient composition in the group may be fixed or may vary with each visit if drop-in attendance is allowed.

### Issue

Group care is less expensive than individually delivered care, but information on effectiveness and best practices is lacking. A review of clinical evidence and current guidelines will help to inform decisions about group care for patients with mental health disorders.

### Methods

A limited literature search was conducted of key resources, and titles and abstracts of the retrieved publications were reviewed. Full-text publications

were evaluated for final article selection according to predetermined selection criteria (population, intervention, comparator, outcomes, and study designs).

### Key Messages

- Included studies showed no important differences between the effectiveness of group care and individually delivered care.
- No information was found on the cost-effectiveness of group care.
- One evidence-based guideline recommends group care for selected patients with mild to moderate depression.
- Evidence comparing group care with individually delivered care is sparse.

### Results

The literature search identified 593 citations, with no additional articles identified from other sources. After screening the abstracts, 46 were deemed potentially relevant and 4 met the criteria for inclusion in this review: 1 systematic review, 2 randomized controlled trials, and 1 guideline.

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