An Evidence Based Approach for the AOD Sector

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Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia
Peak, national, non-government organisation representing the interests of the Australian alcohol and other drugs sector

Funding: government, project and policy work and membership

Advocacy, Policy, Drug Action Week, NRC.
National Resource Centre

- Library for members
  - AIM, Drug Contents, Electronic journals, ILL, literature searches (Ask a Librarian), Update and Drugtalk – (WWW, Media releases, newsclips) and Project work eg RADAR (www.radar.org.au) and the National Inhalants Information Service (www.inhalantsinfo.org.au)

- DRUG database

- Promoting improved research skills for AOD workers
What can we do for you?

- Non-members – Ask a librarian service, Drug database, research methods training, AOD clearinghouse.
- Members - Ask a librarian service, Drug database, AustHealth and other databases, research methods training, access to full text e-journal articles.
So you have a question or project

Background Questions – general
Write down your question.
- What information is available relating to prisoners and therapeutic communities?

Complete an “Ask a Librarian form”
Go to the Drug Database
- Database that is specific to alcohol, tobacco and other drug resources.
- Contains citations of books, journal articles, reports
- Strong Australian content
- Over 70,000 items
- Maintained by ADCA National Resource Centre.
1) Predictors of retention in an alternative-to-prison substance abuse treatment program.
Authors: Brocato, Jo (2) Wagner, Eric F. (20)
Source: Criminal Justice and Behavior
Volume: 35 (1) January 2008
Pages: 99-119
Imprint: 2008

Authors: Welsh, Wayne N. (2) McGrain, Patrick N.
Source: Drug and Alcohol Dependence
Volume: 96 (3) August 2008
Pages: 271-280
Imprint: 2008

3) Are prisoner characteristics associated with therapeutic community treatment process?
Authors: Chan, Kitty S. (5) Wenzel, Suzanne (6) Mandell, Wallace (8) Orlando, Maria (10) Ebener, Patricia (6)
Source: American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse
Volume:33 (2) 2007
Pages: 267-279
Imprint: 2007
How to get full text

- Free database at best have abstracts not full text
- Full text journal articles are rarely free
- Obtain them from a library (NRC) or a full text database if you have access.
More complex question

Formulating your question is the most important part of the research process. More complex questions require more time and thought to get a good result.

“My boss is changing the way we do things based on his previous job experiences. I want to find a way of measuring what works in a therapeutic community”
The question - Foreground

- Write down what you want to know or do.
- Will PICO help you?
- Circle key words, think of alternatives or more specific terms.
- Think about the type of information that you hope to find and try and incorporate that into the query.
- Is your question answerable?
The PICO question

- **P** population (patient, problem group, disease, race or age.)
- **I** intervention (what main intervention or exposure are you considering)
- **C** comparison (what is the main alternative to compare with the intervention)
- **O** outcome (what can you hope to accomplish, measure, improve or affect).
Applying PICO

- P – Therapeutic Community
- I - Assessment
- C – No assessment
- O – Improved client outcomes

What assessment tools could be used to measure outcomes in a therapeutic community?
2. Search for the evidence

- What – first terms to use?
  Therapeutic community, AND evaluation/assessment/outcomes
- Where – first databases – Drug, PubMed,
  (these are both free access)
- When – Last five years (English/Human)
- How – Try yourself or ask a librarian.
Evidence Pyramid

- Randomized Controlled Double Blind Studies
- Cohort Studies
- Case Control Studies
- Case Series
- Case Reports
- Ideas, Editorials, Opinions
- Animal research
- In vitro ('test tube') research

Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses
Further validity evidence for the dimensions of change in therapeutic community treatment instrument.
Authors: Orlando Edelen, Maria Miles, Jeremy N.V. (3) Chan Osilla, Karen Wenzel, Suzanne L. (8)
Source: American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Measuring client clinical progress in therapeutic community treatment: the therapeutic community Client Assessment Inventory, Client Assessment Summary, and Staff Assessment Summary.
Authors: Kressel, David (3) De Leon, George (29) Palij, Michael (4)
Source: Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment
Volume: 19 (3) October 2000 Pages: 267-272 Imprint

Circumstances, motivation, readiness, and suitability (the CMRS scales): predicting retention in therapeutic community treatment.
- Source: American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse
PubMed
National Library of Medicine US

- Contains over 16 million journal article citations
- Dates back to the mid-1950s
- International and medical
- Current, widespread availability, good journal coverage
- Searches best using subject headings.
To get started with PubMed, enter one or more search terms.

Search terms may be topics, authors or journals.

The NIH Public Access Policy May Affect You

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Then your manuscript must be made available in PubMed Central

How?
If you publish in one of these journals, they will take care of the whole process.
If you publish anywhere else, deposit the manuscript in PubMed Central via one of the options described at publicaccess.nih.gov.

PubMed is a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine that includes over 18 million citations from MEDLINE and other life science journals for biomedical articles back to the 1950s. PubMed includes links to full text articles and other related resources.
How important are client characteristics to understanding treatment process in the therapeutic community?
PMID: 15624553 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

Personality disorder: attitudes, understanding and treatment.
PMID: 15595487 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

Outcomes from a therapeutic community for homeless addicted mothers and their children.
PMID: 15283208 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

Modified TC for MICA offenders: crime outcomes.
PMID: 15282836 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]


3. Select articles from a list.

- Remember your question. “What assessment tools could be used to measure outcomes in a therapeutic community?”

- Don’t go by the title alone – read the abstract or look at the subject headings.

- It is doubtful there will be an article written that will exactly answer your query.

- Be able to justify your choices.
No high level evidence?

- Be aware of what type of article you are looking at.
- Appraise the article by examining for:
  - Does it help answer your question
  - Setting
  - Currency
  - Author
  - Journal
Get the full text

- Most articles are not free
- Choose carefully you want things “just in time” not “just in case”
- Don’t leave it all to the last minute to obtain full text it may need to be sourced from another library.
I haven't got the time

- Two factors greatly influence how much time an evidence gathering exercise will take:
  - The formulation of the question
  - The sources accessed to retrieve information
  - Google 2,680,000 hits
The Resource

- Book 1 – Background, databases, levels of evidence, checklist, finding out more and glossary of terms

- Book 2 – The process is not about individual client treatment but more about groups of clients, processes, programmes and guidelines.
Tips

- Spend time formulating the question it’s the most important step
- Choose more than one relevant, quality database
- Learn to search effectively and efficiently using limits and subjects
- Look for high quality articles
- Critically appraise your results
- Keep a notebook for notes
- EBP research skills can be achieved in steps.