

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Have you seen My PAL?'Physical Achievement Log (PAL): A physical health tool for people with serious mental illness (SMI)

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Background to the problem: The physical health of individuals SMI is a cause for growing concern (Robson et al. 2013). Individuals with a SMI have a reduced life expectancy of up to 10-15 years due to physical ill health, in comparison to the general population (Collins, Tranter and Irvine 2012). The physical health care of this cohort has been described by Hemingway et.al (2014) as a 'silent sandal'.

The interest toward the development of 'My PAL' emerged from the findings of 'PHILIP' (2014) a local study conducted within the Dublin South Central, Dublin North and Kildare West Wicklow mental health services. This study highlighted the increased prevalence of overweight and obesity within a small cohort (n=69) of mental health service users. My Physical Achievement Log is a pilot study currently being conducted within an Assertive Outreach Team within the Dublin South Central Mental Health service.

My PAL is a service user held empowerment tool which is pocket sized, enabling to the individual to carry at all times. It acts as prompter or a guide for the individual when attending GP appointments or other health related appointments. It includes a checklist of the physical health markers which when are not checked or followed up on are contributing to the physical ill health of this cohort. This checklist is solely for the individual to complete however support is provided by the key Nurse. My PAL also includes an action planning section whereby when an issue relating to their physical health is identified; a plan is devised between the individual and their nurse. This plan is incorporated into their individualised care plan. My PAL is an educational tool used in partnership with the service user encouraging them to be an active participant within their physical health care.

Workshop Objective: The objective of the workshop is to share My PAL with fellow health professionals in a bid to raise awareness and divert greater attention to the physical health of those with SMI.

Target audience: This workshop is targeted at all healthcare professionals, specifically those working with individuals with SMI. Or anyone who has an interest in the physical health of this cohort.

Hennessy; Have you seen My PAL?'Physical Achievement Log (PAL): A physical health tool for people with serious mental illness (SMI)

Conclusion: In the absence of local and national policies relating to the physical health care of this cohort, 'My PAL' aims to empower and activate individuals to take ownership of their physical health. It is recovery orientated and embraces service user involvement in its development. It may help improve the physical outcomes of this cohort.

Keywords: mental health; physical health; severe mental illness; empowerment
