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Exploring barriers to accessing Primary Care Psychology services in Ireland

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Abstract Background

Primary Care Psychology (PCP) services in Ireland employ a stepped-care approach to mental healthcare. Despite often being the first point of contact for mental health support, access to PCP can be tardy and restrictive. To date little is known about the specific barriers to access that exist at PCP level; and how these should be addressed to overcome the burden of accessibility for the community.

This study seeks to assess barriers to accessing Child and Family PCP services in Ireland. Secondary to this, the research aims to elucidate how barriers impact upon service provision from a client perspective. Findings from this research will inform recommendations for enhanced access to Child and Family PCP in Ireland.

Methods

A mixed-method sequential explanatory design will be employed to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Participants (children and/ or their guardians) supported by Child and Family PCP services in Ireland will be recruited to participate.

Quantitative measures will be employed to assess any barriers reported by participants. These measures include: ‘The Session Feedback Questionnaire’ and ‘The Experience of Service Questionnaire’. Further data will then be collected via semi-structured interviews and focus groups from a sample of participants who completed the questionnaires, to inform quantitative findings.

Inclusion criteria feature individuals with the capacity to provide informed consent/assent and experience support from PCP services. Exclusion criteria include individuals not supported by PCP services and are unable to provide informed consent/assent. Participants whom English is not their first language must be at least reasonably proficient in English to ensure comprehension and accuracy of responding.

Results

This research is ongoing, therefore formal results are pending.

Conclusions

Final assumptions based on the dataset are yet to be established due to the ongoing nature of the research.

Keywords: Primary Care Psychology, Child and Family, service delivery, barriers, access.