Summary of Findings of the WaMH in PC
GP and Practice Nurse Survey 2011

Introduction

WaMH in PC (Wales Mental Health in Primary Care) commissioned Lundbeck Limited to undertake WaMH in PC's second audit of GPs and Practice Nurses in Wales, the first of which was completed in 2009. The results of the audit are summarised in this report and will help to inform the development of the Gold Standard Programme as well as inform policy makers and service providers of the views of the primary care workforce

Methodology

The survey ran from 1st September to 11th October 2011. Questionnaires were disseminated primarily by the Business Service Centres; a letter was sent to Practice Managers throughout Wales inviting GPs and Practice Nurses to take part.

A total of 202 primary care healthcare professionals in Wales responded to the questionnaire (compared to 174 in 2009), providing a statistically strong sample size to gauge perceptions. Survey respondents were not incentivised. The questions were largely closed multiple choices options. However, there were also a small number of qualitative questions. It has to be recognised that the survey only reflects the views and perspectives of primary care professionals

Who answered the survey?

All practices in Wales were invited to respond. Of the 202 respondents, 80.5% positively identified themselves as GPs. 24 positively identified themselves as practice nurses while 97 respondents chose not to specify their professional background. Only 40 (29.4%) of the respondents said they had a special interest in mental health and in addition 125 (90.6%) of respondents) said they had "no specific qualifications" in the field of mental health.

Key findings

The survey responses provide rich insights into the perceptions of practice teams. Below we have highlighted some key findings that suggest opportunities for WaMH in PC to develop its, services and profile, further, as well as provide highly relevant information for policy makers and service providers at a local level.

Mental Health in Wales

o   Improvements are needed with the interface between primary and secondary care, in terms of referrals and pathways.

o   Health Care Professionals (HCP) feel social issues, especially the support of family and availability of employment; affect the ability to manage mental health effectively at a practice level.

o   HCPs consider that funding constraints and infrastructure affect the effective management of mental health.

o   Nearly two thirds of the HCPs feel able to deal with mental health and consult with their primary care colleagues when appropriate.

o   More support is needed across the mental health pathway.

o   The two improvement areas considered to be of high importance are outreach and community services and the referral/interface system to secondary care.

o   Most HCPs feel they spend 10-30% of their working time on mental health issues.

o   Most HCPs see this area of work as difficult or very difficult although they were committed to performing it.

WaMH in PC (Wales Mental Health in Primary Care)

o   49% of respondents had heard of WaMH in PC, prior to completion of the survey, an increase of 23% compared to the 2009 results. Those who had heard of the group had done so via email, information sheets, WaMH in PC website and colleagues.

o   The WaMH in PC Information Sheets appear to be received by most respondents though fewer HCPs are reading or using them in practice.

o   Dementia and CAMHS represent the areas that HCPs think should be priority areas for WaMH in PC to focus on.

Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010

o   Just over a third of HCPs have heard of the Measure, with a range of awareness across the Health Boards.

o   The low awareness and knowledge of the Measure indicates that education is required.

o   Those respondents that knew about Part 1 hoped to see more mental health trained workers from primary or secondary care working within practice.

Dementia

o   Less than 20% of HCPs are aware of the National Dementia Vision for Wales.

o   They feel extra support with making and sharing the diagnosis as well as managing behavioural disturbance in patients are the main improvements needed for managing dementia.

For a full copy of the survey results please visit the WaMH in PC website at

www.wamhinpc.org.uk