Key findings

Following discharge from hospital service users want support to:
- Spend more time outside of their homes.
- Develop a weekly routine of activities.
- Plan and/or cook healthy affordable meals.

Parents discharged from hospital wanted support to increase their confidence in their role as a carer and parent.

Carers would like:
- To receive information about local community resources that the person they care for may be interested in post-discharge from hospital.
- Support to develop approaches to step back and enable the person they care for to be more independent.

Post-discharge from hospital, occupational therapists:
- Need to enable people to make basic decisions about what they want to do.
- Use activity grading to ensure service users feel a sense of achievement post-discharge from hospital.

Survey of 144 occupational therapists:
- 41% of respondents stated they are interested in participating in occupational therapy intervention research in their current role.
- Facilitators to participation in occupational therapy intervention research were identified as: strong occupational therapy leadership and specific postgraduate training for people who have not had the opportunity to engage in research.

Interviews with managers:
Participating in occupational therapy clinical research increases the occupational therapists’ confidence in their practice and to continue to participate in research.

Project aims

To revise an intervention, GLOW (Graduating Living skills Outside the Ward) to ensure it meets the occupational needs of people with a diagnosed mood or personality disorder.

To explore the barriers and facilitators for occupational therapists carrying out an occupational therapy intervention within a randomised controlled trial. This will inform a research protocol of a fully powered randomised controlled trial of the occupational therapy intervention.

Background

Evaluation of the clinical effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions for people with mental health problems has been identified as a priority for the profession by commissioners, clinicians and managers (Smyth 2014, COT 2006, Morley & Smyth 2013).

A feasibility study of GLOW demonstrated preliminary evidence of effectiveness, indicating the need to further evaluate the clinical and cost effectiveness of GLOW in a fully powered randomised controlled trial. The feasibility study results also indicated that although GLOW was developed for people with a diagnosed psychotic disorder, GLOW would also be potentially useful for people with a diagnosed mood or personality disorder. To ensure the intervention meets the needs of people with a diagnosed affective or personality disorder, their experience of returning to living in the community following discharge from hospital needs to be identified.

Challenges to occupational therapists carrying out an occupational therapy intervention as part of a research study were identified in the feasibility study. These challenges need to be explored to inform a protocol of a randomised controlled trial of GLOW.
Methodology
Qualitative research methods were used in this study in the form of semi-structured interviews with 16 service users with a diagnosed mood or personality disorder to inform the revision of GLOW. These interviews were carried out by a researcher with lived experience of having a diagnosed mental health problem. Semi-structured interviews were also carried out with six carers in addition to two focus groups with 6 occupational therapists to inform the revision of the intervention manual.

To explore the barriers and facilitators of occupational therapists carrying out an occupational therapy intervention within a randomised controlled trial to test the effectiveness of the intervention, semi-structured interviews with 6 service managers were carried out.

A quantitative study design was used to carry out an online survey of occupational therapists working clinically in adult community mental health services in South East England to identify their research skills, experience and interest in taking part in occupational therapy intervention research.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The results of this study have informed the revision of the GLOW manual, ensuring it meets the needs of people with mood and personality disorder and incorporates approaches to involve and support carers of service users participating in GLOW. A recommendation of this study for clinicians is that occupational therapists should provide carers and service users with a list of local community social, leisure and educational facilities at the point of discharge from hospital. This study also recommends that occupational therapists need to ring-fence CPD time to support the development of their research skills and evidence base of their practice. They should be supported to attend research training such as Masters of Research (MRes) courses. In clinical intervention research occupational therapists will need to report and discuss the outcome of the intervention with the service user and clinical team. This study therefore recommends that occupational therapists therefore need to routinely use outcome measures to report the outcome of occupational therapy intervention, as outcome measurement is a key component of building the evidence base in practice.

Research recommendation
The number of occupational therapists needed to use the intervention as part of a randomised controlled trial needs to be much higher due to the high number of occupational therapists working part time rather than that of full time occupational therapy participants. A higher number of occupational therapists will allow for limited time occupational therapists have to take on cases to use intervention with. In-depth negotiation with borough lead occupational therapists, research team and team leaders is required to identify and enable occupational therapists to take part in the clinical research study through revising caseloads and negotiating workloads.

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References


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