

Creation of consensus recommendations for collaborative practice in the Malaysian psychiatric system: a modified Delphi study

ABSTRACT

There is strong evidence that collaborative practice in mental healthcare improves outcomes for patients. The concept of collaborative practice can include collaboration between healthcare workers of different professional backgrounds and collaboration with patients, families and communities. Most models of collaborative practice were developed in Western and high-income countries and are not easily translatable to settings which are culturally diverse and lower in resources. This project aimed to develop a set of recommendations to improve collaborative practice in Malaysia. In the first phase, qualitative research was conducted to better understand collaboration in a psychiatric hospital (previously published). In the second phase a local hospital level committee from the same hospital was created to act on the qualitative research and create a set of recommendations to improve collaborative practice at the hospital for the hospital. Some of these recommendations were implemented, where feasible and the outcomes discussed. These recommendations were then sent to a nationwide Delphi panel. These committees consisted of healthcare staff of various professions, patients and carers. The Delphi panel reached consensus after three rounds. The recommendations include ways to improve collaborative problem solving and decision making in the hospital, ways to improve the autonomy and relatedness of patients, carers and staff and ways to improve the levels of resources (e.g. skills training in staff, allowing people with lived experience of mental disorder to contribute). This study showed that the Delphi method is a feasible method of developing recommendations and guidelines in Malaysia and allowed a wider range of stakeholders to contribute than traditional methods of developing guidelines and recommendations.