

Research Advisory Group Vacancy (x5) -

Project title: Developing and evaluating a shared decision making intervention for service users and professionals focused on psychiatric medication management

20th September 2010

This is an invitation for service users and carers to join the advisory group of a new project to be funded by the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) funding stream.

The research study

There is a perception, supported by preliminary research, that users of psychiatric medication often experience a one-sided relationship with those prescribing medication. In particular, service users report lack of involvement or choice in the treatment selected for them. They feel ill-informed and uninvolved in decisions about their initial and on-going treatment. Many service users and mental health professionals feel that psychiatric medication might be more effective if changes in practice involving clinicians and service users were brought about.

A principal aim of this research is to test whether it is possible to increase the involvement of service users in decisions about their medication, and whether this will lead to worthwhile improvements. After a review of worldwide best practice, a training programme will be developed and used within a local NHS adult community psychiatric service. Service users, psychiatrists and community psychiatric nurses will be trained in how to make more collaborative decisions about medication. The desired effect of the training is that patients supported by clinicians will become increasingly involved and better able to make informed decisions about their medication, that they feel happier with these decisions, and that their relationships with professionals improve.

This research is important for patients because it will enable more focus on their concerns, experiences and goals relating to psychiatric medication. It is important for clinicians who will develop a better understanding of patients' concerns. The project will hopefully lead to increased mutual confidence and more appropriate and successful use of medication that is sensitive to individuals' needs.

The project has been initiated by both patients and professionals and will be progressed as a fully collaborative project. If successful, it would inform further research and could influence the training of NHS clinicians.

The Call

We are looking for up to three service users and two carers to join the steering group of this exciting and innovative project, developed over two years by a local Cambridge based group of mental health service users, professionals, researchers, and a carer. The role of the advisory group will be to ensure the project remains sensitive to the stakeholders, by offering advice to the project manager and project team on how to introduce the project to potential participants, assisting with the implement the project, the data analysis and the dissemination of the findings.

The role

Using your own experiences, your role would be to help guide the research and provide advice throughout the process. Your views will be very important to how the research is conducted. The principal investigator will provide the guidance needed about the task and provide information and support.

You would as part of the role be required to attend the steering group meetings (see below). You will provide input to these meetings and be available for contact occasionally outside these times. The advisory group is proposed to last from January 2011 until September 2014.

Person specification

- Lived experience of mental health issues or caring for a family member or friend with mental health problems
- An interest in the research topic
- Knowledge of the research topic by training, education or experience
- A desire to learn more about conducting research
- Have time to commit to the project (see below)
- Experience of working in teams is preferable
- Been involved in similar patient and public participation activities (desirable)

Frequency of meetings

The group will meet three times in the first year and twice per year in the two subsequent years. Meetings are proposed to take up to 2 hours. From time to time we may also ask members of the advisory group to work with the management team in small groups on specific tasks.

Pay

Travelling expenses and an honorarium for participation will be paid to service users and carers who become members of the advisory group.

Whom to contact

If you are interested please contact soon Prof. Shula Ramon, the principal investigator, for further information and discussion of your likely contribution, on the following e-mail address: shula.ramon@anglia.ac.uk or you can call/leave a message on: 01223 363271 ext. **2128**.