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8.4. Developing Clinical Practice Guidelines for violence risk assessment in mental health triage: A systematic review

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Background: On a global level, there is a growing trend to utilise mental health triage service systems as a way of providing consumers with access to 24 hour mental health care. At present, violence risk assessment in mental health triage lacks a suitable evidence base and clear guidelines. This presentation provides an overview of a Clinical Practice Guideline for violence risk assessment at point of entry to health services.

Aims: The objective of this study was to develop Clinical Practice Guidelines for violence risk assessment in mental health triage, and to pilot test the Clinical Guidelines in two major hospitals in Melbourne.

Method: The method employed in the study was a systematic review, as per the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council’s methodology for developing Clinical Guidelines. Research was conducted at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Alfred Hospital to establish the utility of the Guideline in practice.

Results: The systematic review established the highest level of evidence for violence risk assessment. Clinical Practice Guidelines for mental health triage were developed from these findings.


8.5. “Uncertain Risk for Safety?”: Adapting the Canadian Emergency Department Triage Acuity Scale for mental health presentations

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Mental health presentations can present a challenge to general hospital Emergency Departments (EDs) and have the potential to contribute to unstable situations or result in patients leaving before they are assessed. In collaboration with the Canadian Triage Acuity Scale National Working Group a triage module and teaching package to address the needs and concerns of mental health patients has been developed. This project proposes to evaluate the effect of that module on the consistency and effectiveness of the triage of mental health patients in Canadian EDs and the resultant impact on overall department functioning. Objectives for the project are: to evaluate the impact of the updated education tool on triage decision-making on intra- and inter-rater reliability; to measure the impact on staff knowledge, comfort, and satisfaction with mental health presentations; to develop and employ a benchmarking process to more accurately describe ED processes and disposition for mental health patients; and to engage client