

Improving Physical Health Care in Older People in Mental Health Settings: The ImPreSs-Care Qualitative Study

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Background

- Many older people are living with co-occurring physical and mental health disorders.
- Few service models are available providing comprehensive physical health input to older adults in secondary mental healthcare settings.
- Little information is available regarding specific physical healthcare needs facing older people receiving specialist mental healthcare.

Aim

To determine the facilitators and barriers to delivering physical healthcare for older adult patients, their carers, and staff within specialist mental health settings (in-patients and community).

Methods

- 54 semi-structured interviews
- Conducted in two hospital trusts (Leicestershire Partnership Trust and Nottingham Healthcare Foundation Trust)
- 28 staff, 19 carers, 7 patients
- Interviews explored facilitators and barriers to delivering physical healthcare to older people (aged >65 years) receiving secondary mental health care with combined physical needs

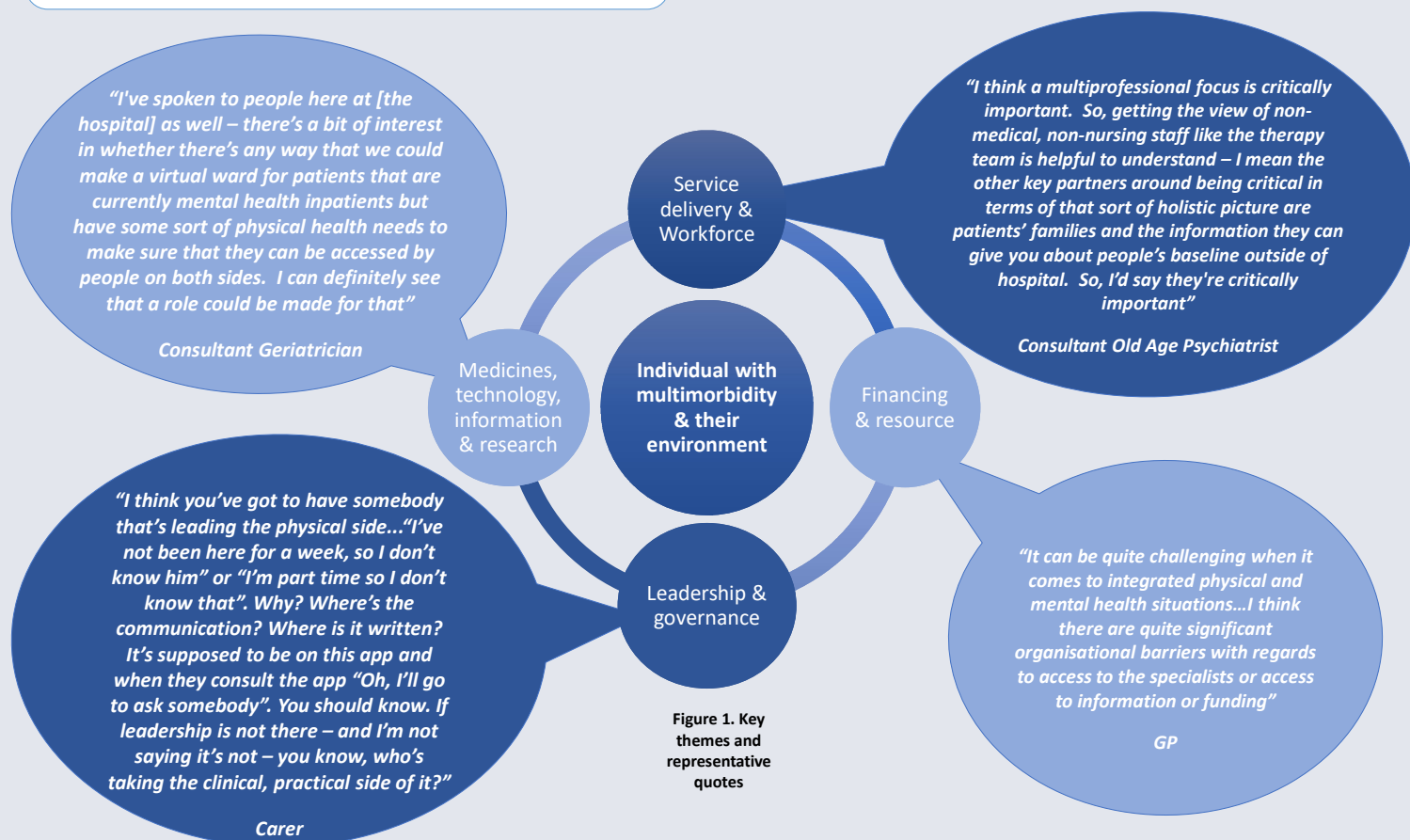


Figure 1. Key themes and representative quotes

Results

- Figure 1 summarises the key themes and representative quotes from the study with additional sub-themes summarised below:
- **MDT working:** Staff valued a multidisciplinary approach to integrated care, particularly for screening and identifying patients.
- **Training and skills:** There was felt to be a loss of physical health training and skills over-time, particularly amongst nursing staff leading to difficulties managing fluids and catheters.
- **Support and availability of physical health expertise:** There were felt to be avoidable admissions to the acute trust due to a focus on acute decompensation rather than optimising stable disease.
- **Advanced care planning, end of life care and polypharmacy** were felt to be challenging, particularly from a physical health perspective.

Discussion

- Integrated care should use a multi-disciplinary approach, particularly to help identify and screen patients for physical health review.
- Education and training should be incorporated to allow sharing of physical health knowledge and skills.
- Senior leadership and oversight should be incorporated, both Geriatrician and GP involvement were valued contributions.
- Services should support advanced care planning and end of life care from physical causes in mental health settings where possible.