

Occupational Medicine Specialist training – My Journey

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The Journey....

- 1993 Graduated - Edinburgh University
- 1994 House officer Jobs
- 1994- 1997 Medical rotation- Cornwall
- 1997-1999 GP training (MRCGP 1999)
- 2000-2003- GP partner/locum, family planning, sexual health, clinical research, MOD army recruitment medicals

- 2004- 2011 OM specialist training NHS Fife
- 2011 Accredited specialist/MFOM



Why Occupational Health? Why specialist training?

- Army Medical Recruitment medical – Glencorse Barracks
- GP colleague- MCA and OGUK medicals
- Diploma
-

Specialist Training

2004
OHSAS- NHS
FIFE/TAYSIDE

7
CONSULTANTS
4 TRAINEES

PUBLIC
SECTOR/ NHS –
SPCB, SPS, SW,
Local Council

(Dissertation)

<https://www.foundationforpositivementalhealth.com/research/occupational-health/>

MFOM 2011



The Dissertation

'Positive Mental Training' in an Occupational Health Setting.
Dr Jacqueline Thompson

A Problem

The business costs of mental ill health at work -£billion (1)

Ill absenteeism (£4.6bn)
 Ill reduced productivity (£2.1bn)
 Ill self absence (£2.0bn)

Qualitative interviews

11 participants (2 controls)
Through content analysis, themes emerged

Missing services: Depression, Anxiety, Coping, Occupational stress, Communication, Unsupportive work culture

Barriers: Lack of education, Demotivation, Lack of information, Funding issues, Time

Positive effects on work, home and relationships

Improved relaxation, sleep and mood

Increased ability to help others (control to participants)

Strong support for OH follow up

"The programme has had a positive effect on my working life"

z = 19

A Possible Solution?

Individual Cognitive Behavioural Approach most effective workplace intervention for employees with Common Mental Health Problems (2)

What power is required for full study?

Out of 2000 staff in the Organisation in a 6 month recruitment period:

Number of staff

For a study at 80% power and 5% significance:
 To show a 50% reduction in total sickness absence: 46 per group.
 To show a 50% reduction in mental health absence: 124 per group.

"Positive Mental Training"

- 12 week self help audio programme
- Evidence based approaches (relaxation, cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness)
- Origins, peak performance in athletes
- Equal effectiveness to antidepressants in primary care study (3)

"I have found the whole thing very helpful actually the help you know that actually we might you know and it certainly has made me think more at self help."

"Topic here, said I have more confidence and a swagger about me!"

"Makes me feel that everything is not made and that there is colour out there"

Evaluation using an Exploratory Study

Hypothesis, 'Positive Mental Training' will be:

- acceptable to employees
- reduce employee ill-health
- reduce the duration of sickness absence

Conclusions

- The intervention was popular, safe and acceptable
- Variety of perceived benefits
- Clinical effectiveness not established
- Self referrers motivated to take part
- Self referrers not just the 'worried well'
- High drop out rate

Study Design

Mixed methodological approach

Quantitative evaluation
Partially Randomised Preference' study design:

- Intervention + 'Care as Usual'
- 'Care as Usual' alone
- Random allocation to each group

Measurement via validated questionnaires:

- Clinical Outcomes for Routine Evaluation—Outcome Measure (CORE-OM)
- Hospital Anxiety Depression Scale (HAD)
- Maslach Burnout Inventory—General Survey

Non-Validated questionnaires:

- Post Intervention Satisfaction questionnaire

Qualitative evaluation

- Semi structured individual interviews

Quantitative Questionnaires

Changes to Questionnaire Scores over time (scores not relative to each other)
Regression to the Mean?

Week

Study Results

Reason for O.H. Involvement

P = 0.003 $r^2 = 6.84$

52 participants: 25 female, 7 male
28 intervention
4 controls

Wide range of clinical symptoms and severity.

Recommendations

- Include a randomised arm to establish effectiveness
- Explore client and external factors to identify those most likely to benefit, and to encourage compliance
- OH professionals evaluate own position of influence

"I think once I have the problem sorted out I can start relaxing"

"If I could think of one happy place I would not need to be listening to this CD"

Study Results (continued)

STUDY:
80% showed a reliable +/- clinical change

CORE BENCHMARK:
Lowest 25th Centile organisations 67-73% reliable +/- clinical change

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References:

- Mental Health at Work: Developing the Business Case. Policy & Research Centre for Mental Health 2007
- Workplace Interventions for People with Common Mental Health Problems: Evidence Review and Recommendations. Reynolds, L, Gleave, R. British Occupational Health Research Fund, London, 2005
- A Benchmark Feasibility Study of a Self-Help Approach Treatment for Depression in Primary Care. Dobbins A, Maxwell M, Sloan R. International Journal of Clinical & Experimental Hypnosis, 2006, 57, 3, 260-276

The End Game

- 2011-2014

Abermed (InternationalSOS)OGUK/MCA/Overseas medicals

- 2014- to date

Health Management (part of Medigold Health since 2023)

Consultant Occupational Physician -MD for Pensions since 2022)

Tutor at Edinburgh University/ Appraiser/Clinical and Educational supervisor

Private versus NHS specialist training

- Balance between training/operational
- Level of supervision
- Contract exposure/experience
- Financial – pension
- Home based/face to face / travel
- Trainee network



OH specialist training- conclusion

- Structured
- E-portfolio
- Evidence assessed based on where you are in training

The Lost Dr. Seuss Poem



I Love My Job!

I love my job. I love the pay!
I love it more and more each day.
I love my boss, he is the best!
I love his boss and all the rest.

I love my office and its location. I hate to have to go on vacation.
I love my furniture, drab and grey, and piles of paper that grow each day!
I think my job is really swell, there's nothing else I love so well.
I love to work among my peers, I love their leers and jeers and sneers.
I love my computer and its software; I hug it often though it won't care.
I love each program and every file, I'd love them more if they worked a while.

I'm happy to be here. I am. I am.
I'm the happiest slave of the Firm, I am.
I love this work. I love these chores.
I love the meetings with deadly bores.
I love my job - I'll say it again - I even love those friendly men.
Those friendly men who've come today, in clean white coats to take me away!!!!

