

INCREASING THE UPTAKE OF EVIDENCE-BASED CARE THROUGH E-LEARNING: RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL COMORBIDITY GUIDELINES ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAM

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Introduction: The high prevalence of comorbidity means that clinicians are frequently faced with the need to manage complex psychiatric symptoms that may interfere with their ability to treat clients' alcohol or other drug (AOD) use. To improve clinicians' capacity to respond, the Australian Government Department of Health funded the development of evidence-based National Comorbidity Guidelines and accompanying online training program on the management of co-occurring AOD and mental health conditions.

Method: 577 registrants to the online training program were recruited into the study between November 2017-May 2019 and 117 followed-up at the conclusion of the program. Participants' knowledge, competence and confidence in responding to AOD and mental health conditions were assessed in a pre-post evaluation, as well as whether the training program led to any specific changes in clinical practice or client outcomes.

Results: Although analysis is ongoing, preliminary findings demonstrate that the program has led substantially improved participants' confidence (93.3% agree/strongly agree) and capacity (94.3% agree/strongly agree) to respond to comorbidity, with 44.4% reporting that the training program led to specific changes in their clinical practice. Moreover, 61.1% reported that client outcomes improved following training completion.

Discussion and Conclusions: These findings support existing research highlighting the potential of e-learning as an effective and accessible training method for the AOD workforce. By increasing the capacity of clinicians to respond to comorbidity through e-learning, it is anticipated that the outcomes for people with co-occurring mental health conditions will be improved.

Implications for Practice or Policy: These findings highlight the National Comorbidity Guidelines and accompanying online training program as resources which have the capacity to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of AOD workers to respond to comorbidity.

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