



OUTCOMES

Autumn 2010

Healthcare budget reductions: A rational approach



Recent Publications

Market review paper compares different channels for capturing patient experience

CoMetrica has published a paper useful to anyone who is considering improving their means of measuring patient experience. You can download the paper from www.CoMetrica.co.uk [here](#)

Podiatry outcomes case studies

Two new case studies have been published covering the implementation of continuous outcomes measurement in NHS Podiatry services. You can download them from www.CoMetrica.co.uk [here](#)

While government headlines indicate “no reduction in healthcare funding”, the reality for most services is a sharp reduction in budgets to fund inflation and unavoidable new costs.

Almost all services have had to take a close look at how costs can be reduced without impacting on quality. Where demand and expectation from patients is high, service managers have no alternative but to consider whether all aspects of services are affordable. Inevitably, cuts in service scope or raising treatment thresholds appear as unpopular decisions made by managers in isolation.

Healthcare commissioning and provision should be based on agreed effectiveness & benefit methodology but invariably it is based on historical demand and waiting times. What is needed is a consistent use of Patient Reported Outcomes and Effectiveness data. Apart from the empirical benefit of ranking the effectiveness of treatments against their cost, the fact that the effectiveness is reported by patients, rather than clinicians, provides a powerful mandate where services have to be prioritised.

The Department of Health scheme which introduced some PROMS last year is a commendable but slow start.

The scheme is expected to be extended to include some long term conditions but remains a slow burn strategy rather than providing immediate economic benefit.

Many clinicians are aware of specialist PROMS in their own areas and a few do use them in an isolated context, but PROMS are shrouded in academic mystery for many. The reality is that PROMS are available for many conditions and can provide a key determinant of cost effectiveness, particularly where services are supplied universally across, for example, all age groups irrespective of benefit.

Collecting and using PROMS in a practical local situation, for example in a community therapy service is quite achievable even for the smallest of services by using a managed service such as that provided by CoMetrica. Using health status measurement at the correct patient pathway stages, together with on-going supporting consultancy, CoMetrica can measure the clinical outcomes of patients in all services. The quantitative and qualitative results are seen within days enabling patient reported valuation of the care provided in addition to experience measurement.

The result is a complete picture of effectiveness and satisfaction for all patient groups which together can support tough decision making.

Conferences & Events supported by CoMetrica

- 3rd November, London Health 2010 where over 300 delegates heard Andrew Lansley speak on the future of healthcare in the capital
- 2nd November, NHS South East Coast Experience Conference, Bournemouth
- 22nd October, CoMetrica presented outcomes from Podiatry services to their Annual Conference of 1000 delegates, Bournemouth
- 7th October, Speech & Language Conference & AGM, Edinburgh
- 30th September, Measuring Patient Experience, London

Future events

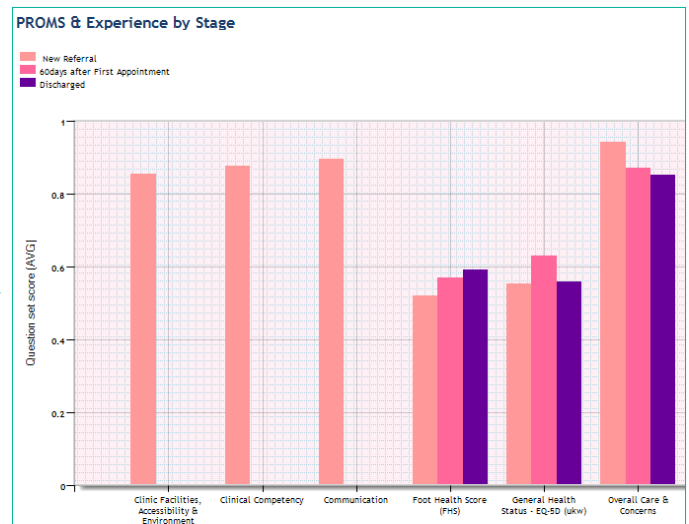
- 23rd November, OT educators, Bangor
- 8th March 2011, Podiatry managers Conference, Northampton

Podiatry Services see results of measuring outcomes in routine patients

At their recent annual conference in Bournemouth attended by 1200 Podiatrists and Podiatric Surgeons, delegates saw the results from two services who have been measuring patient outcomes & experience. CoMetrica presented the results from South Birmingham Community Healthcare and Solent Healthcare Podiatry services on the effectiveness of their treatment for new referrals.

Both used the COM-Q service to measure General Health status and Foot Health status using recognised PROMS at the start of treatment and again after 60 or 90 days. Gains were seen in both PROMS together

with high levels of perceived competence and satisfaction in most areas. One of the key findings was that the gain in health reduced with increasing age, helping put in context the value of universal treatment. Case studies have been written for both services and are available from the www.CoMetrica.co.uk website [here](#)



COM-Q users benefit from system upgrade

CoMetrica has recently upgraded the performance of the COM-Q system with release 2.1. The benefits to users include:

- Results appearing on-screen more quickly.
- Improved filter selection
- Enhanced data export

Future plans include:

- Email and SMS text channels for patient completion and reminders.
- More user-level customization
- Enhanced reporting
- Picture buttons for patient on-line completion

Nutricia uses COM-Q to measure effectiveness of patient training and support in clinical nutrition nationally



Nutricia, a division of Danone, is the leading provider of enteral feeding services to the NHS. Their services include supporting patients in their homes through their dedicated nursing teams across the UK. Nutricia needed a system of assurance that their nursing and support services continue to meet patients' and carers' needs and add value to their contracts. They chose the COM-Q service from CoMetrica because of its inclusive reach for patients in the community and the capability for variable content to match different interactions with patients on a continuous basis.

Nutricia also uses the service to measure the performance of their 24/7 Advice line as perceived by patients and their carers. Nutricia plans to extend the use of COM-Q in the coming weeks to include annual surveys for their patients.

Institute of Healthcare Management reviews Patient Experience capture

The IHM has recently run a feature in their October journal which compares the different channels available for capturing patient experience. The conclusion is that using touch screen devices in clinical settings to capture experience can lead to skewed results as they are only accessible to limited patient groups.

The optimal approach is to make outcome and experience measurement an integral part of service delivery through independently managed collection removing the burden on front-line staff to manage devices and questionnaires.

While on-line capture works well for some groups such as younger patients, paper still has by far the greatest flexibility, coverage and response rate when combined with personalised questionnaires and images.



Reducing questionnaire overload

The COM-Q system from CoMetrica combines clinical and non-clinical outcome and experience measures into one concise electronic form matched to each patient.

Measures are linked to each patients condition and the services actually used and so are more relevant

Multiple completion routes including the most popular - paper, increase response rates

The majority of ALL service users respond

Measuring Outcomes "in Clinic"

As the recognition of PROMS grows, some clinicians have looked at recording them using their clinical administration systems. An example is the capture of MOXFQ responses by Podiatric Surgeons in their PASCOM-10 audit system. While it is great to have outcome measures alongside the clinical record there are a number of significant disadvantages to recording PROMS in this way:

- Patients (or carers) must record their own responses otherwise they are subject to interpretation or the provision of advice in responding which invalidates the measure
- Research shows that respondents give the response they think the interviewer is seeking
- It is extremely time consuming to input during the appointment detracting from clinical time
- Patients need time to consider their response and often need to reflect off others close to them in completion
- If patients are given paper questionnaires to complete from which the clinician inputs the data, the above still apply
- Follow-up measurement, weeks or months after treatment when the patient is not present becomes a headache and is usually incomplete

The ideal here is to have independent managed outcomes measurement and have the results linked into the patient record. For more information about how to achieve this, contact Stuart Mathieson at CoMetrica.

NEEPS to measure outcomes in community based services



North East Essex Provider services had already undertaken a small trial measuring outcomes in community wards and wanted to build on this by measuring outcomes across a wider range of community based services.

They are targeting Breastfeeding Support, Continence, MSK Prolotherapy and Podiatry services by using the COM-Q service to measure general and condition specific PROMS before and after treatment.

To make the outcomes measurement easy they chose CoMetrica to help them get to the results without having to undertake the measurement themselves. The consultancy provided by CoMetrica has guided them in the selection of PROMS and the dynamic content management is allowing them to include patient experience measures as a bonus.

For further information about any of the articles in this newsletter or for further information about the COM-Q service or how CoMetrica can help your organisation measure patient's outcomes & experience, contact Stuart Mathieson on 07973 212306 or via email

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