Victimization experienced by mental health services users during the COVID-19 lockdown period: understanding outcomes and their predictors.

Project report

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Project background

This project was funded by the UKRI Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network as part of its workstream on the theme of understanding violence, abuse and mental health.

The project ran for a total of 8 months

May 2021   March 2022

Project team:
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Project partners and collaborators:

- The Violence, Health and Society (VISION) Consortium (funded by UKPRP)

Project summary

Background

At present, very little is known about mental health service users' experiences of victimization in the period following COVID-19 lockdown in the UK and the effect this experience has had on their mental health.

Methods

This study used anonymised data from South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM) electronic health records (EHRs). Currently over 500,000 individuals are represented in the system. We identified all service users aged 16 years or older who were seeing services in SLAM between 16.12.19 and 15.06.20. Records were reviewed for victimisation recorded during the first COVID-19 lockdown (16.03.20-15.06.20) and for adverse outcomes such as acute care (mental health inpatient admissions, contact with Crisis Team), A&E hospital referrals and death (from any cause) for the period of 16.06.2020 and 01.11.2021.

Results

 Of 21,037 adults receiving mental healthcare between 16.12.19 and 15.06.20, 3,610 (17.2%) had victimisation mentioned in their records between 16.03.2020 and 15.06.2020 (first UK COVID-19 lockdown). Service users with mentions of victimisation in their records had a higher risk for acute care, emergency department referrals, and death, when compared to service users with no recorded victimisation. Experiencing an acute care episode was predicted by age, gender, ethnicity, diagnosis and services used in the three months prior to the lockdown. Having an emergency service referral was predicted by diagnosis of schizophrenia, substance use, mood disorder, personality disorder; having face-to-face, and home treatment service use in the previous three months. The only factor which emerged to predict death was being over 55 years of age. Gender did not appear to have a substantial effect on the above risks.

Conclusions

Service users with documented victimisation during the first UK lockdown were at a higher risk for all negative outcomes we investigated. However, more research is needed to understand the mechanisms which underpin this risk.
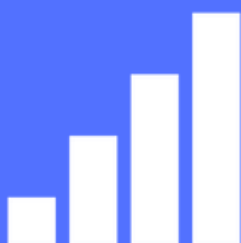
Top 3 key messages from the project

Patients with documented victimisation during the first UK lockdown were at increased risk for adverse outcomes such as acute care, emergency department referrals and all-cause mortality.

Some groups of mental health service users are at particularly increased risk for adverse outcomes.
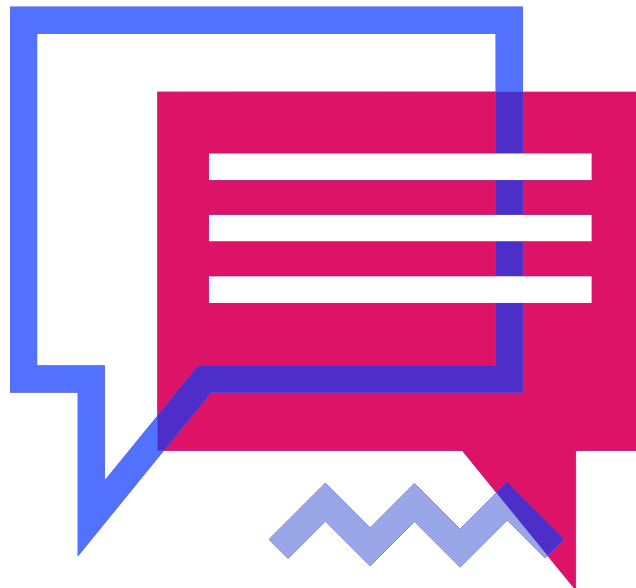
More research is needed into understanding the mechanisms which underpin this risk.

Outputs

Journal publication: Adverse outcomes associated with recorded victimization in mental health electronic records during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown.

- Published *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology.*
- The project team have written up the findings of this project and published in an academic journal.
- To read the paper click <u>here</u>.

More outputs will be shared as part of this project including academic papers. We will be sure to signpost these when they become available.

The Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network

We will be sure to keep our members updated on any outputs linked to this project in the future. To keep updated you can sign up to our mailing list and receive our monthly newsletter. You can also follow us on our socials . All links can be found at the bottom of this page.

About the VAMHN

We are a network of individuals and organisations aiming to reduce the prevalence of mental health problems by addressing associated violence and abuse, particularly domestic and sexual violence. We bring together and support research by experts from a range of disciplines, sectors, and backgrounds - some with personal experience, others with expertise from the work that they do, and survivor researchers with both.

The activities of the network are organised into 3 themes:

Measurement	Measuring the extent and impact of domestic and sexual violence in relation to mental health. Our first year activities focused on the theme of measurement
Understanding	Understanding the pathways that lead to domestic and sexual violence and their relationship to mental health problems
Intervention	Planning interventions and services to prevent, reduce and address domestic and sexual violence in people with mental health problems or at risk of developing mental health problems

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