

MH-OAT Clinical Assessment Protocols and Modules - NSW Standardised

Document Number PD2005_358

Publication date 27-Jan-2005

Functional Sub group Clinical/ Patient Services - Information and data
Clinical/ Patient Services - Mental Health
Clinical/ Patient Services - Records

Summary Mandatory implementation of standardised MH-OAT clinical assessment protocols and documentation for mental health policy.

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Applies to Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations - Non Declared, Divisions of General Practice, Government Medical Officers, NSW Dept of Health, Public Hospitals

Distributed to Public Health System, Divisions of General Practice, Government Medical Officers, Health Associations Unions, NSW Department of Health, Public Hospitals, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres, Tertiary Education Institutes

Review date 27-Jan-2010

File No. 04/2831

Previous reference 2004/30

Issue date 21-Jun-2004

Status Active

Director-General

This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is **mandatory** for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.

CIRCULAR

File No	04/2831
Circular No	2004/30
Issued	21 June 2004
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NSW STANDARDISED MH-OAT (MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS) CLINICAL ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS AND MODULES

This Circular specifies the mandatory implementation of standardised MH-OAT clinical assessment protocols and modules (documentation).

The standardised clinical modules have been developed to support comprehensive clinical assessments and accurate documentation for all mental health consumers. **Area Health Boards and Hospital Boards** are responsible for ensuring that clinicians maintain an adequate health record for each consumer.

All public Mental Health Services are required to adopt the standardised MH-OAT clinical assessment protocols and modules from the date of this Circular.

This Circular has been developed with particular reference to the following:

- Patient Matters Manual for Health Service Areas, NSW Health Department, Chapter 9 – Health Records and Information, and Chapter 13 – Mental Health.
- NSW Mental Health Sentinel Events Review Committee, First Report of the Committee – Tracking Tragedy, A systemic look at suicides and homicides amongst mental health inpatients, December 2003
- National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce, 2002
- National Standards for Mental Health for Mental Health Services, 1996
- Caring for Mental Health – A Framework for Mental Health Care in NSW.

Distributed in accordance with circular list(s):

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In accordance with the provisions incorporated in the Accounts and Audit Determination, the Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officers and their equivalents, within a public health organisation, shall be held responsible for ensuring the observance of Departmental policy (including circulars and procedure manuals) as issued by the Minister and the Director-General of the Department of Health.

It is essential that this Circular be distributed to the following staff:

- All mental health staff in public mental health services in NSW
- Area MHIDP/MH-OAT Co-ordinators and Mental Health Clinical Information Staff
- Area Health Information Managers
- Area Directors of Mental Health
- Area Quality/Quality Improvement Managers
- NSW Health Department Central Office.

1. Introduction

1.1 In New South Wales, each Area Mental Health Service had its own assessment protocol for collecting similar information in different ways. The process of clinical assessment is a critical component of good mental health care. Policy and standards formulated at both State and National levels pay particular attention to clinical assessment.

Following extensive statewide consultations with mental health clinicians in 2003, the assessment protocols and standard clinical documentation have been revised and form the basis for the MH-OAT (Mental Health Outcome and Assessment Tool) clinical modules. The mandatory implementation of the standardised clinical modules will provide for the documentation of clinical practice at different points in the cycle of care (assessment, care planning, review and discharge), along with standard measures of outcomes and case complexity.

1.2 The aims of the standardised clinical modules are to:

- Provide NSW Mental Health Services with a set of clinical modules to record and report mental health assessments, care plans, clinical reviews, discharge summary and outcome measures in a comprehensive and standardised way.
- Standardise mental health clinical assessment protocols to support accurate assessment of consumers, and as a result, provide them with appropriate interventions.
- Strengthen the assessment skills of all direct care clinical mental health professionals involved in conducting assessments.
- Support clinicians' ability to co-ordinate and manage care delivery, to make informed clinical decisions and complete outcome measures.
- Standardise communication pathways in relation to the transfer of care.
- Enhance system-wide accountability through comprehensive assessments and improved standards of documentation.

2. Content of the MH-OAT Clinical Modules

2.1 The MH-OAT Clinical Modules are designed to cover most circumstances requiring clinical documentation in mental health services including inpatient, ambulatory and community residential services across the following age groups:

- Child and Adolescent
- Adult
- Older people.

Additional progress notes (if required) can be used to supplement information collected.

2.2 The *Your guide to MH-OAT – Clinicians reference guide to NSW Mental Health Outcomes and Assessment Tools* has been revised to include the instructions for using the clinical modules.

3. Audit of MH-OAT clinical modules

The Centre for Mental Health will be providing all mental health services with the paper-based MH-OAT clinical modules for the first 12 months of use. Monitoring and evaluation of the clinical modules implementation including audit activities will be undertaken.

Any queries concerning the clinical modules should be directed to Ms Janet Ma, Manager MH-OAT Initiative, Centre For Mental Health, NSW Health Department, telephone (02) 9391 9952.

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