

A Pilot of an Alcohol Brief Intervention in a Section 136 suite

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Introduction

Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 empowers police to remove a person, whom they believe to be suffering from a mental disorder, from a public place if they feel they are in need of care and control. South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust has one section 136 Assessment suite serving a population of approximately a million people. A recent survey of consecutive admissions for six months demonstrated that of 245 individuals admitted 108 (44%) were intoxicated, leading to longer assessment times; these patients were also less likely to be admitted to hospital (1).

There is a substantial body of evidence suggesting that brief interventions in harmful drinkers are effective, with the evidence focusing on primary care and general hospital settings (2,3). Thus far there has been no attempt to introduce this in a section 136 suite.

Aims & Objectives

This project aims to pilot alcohol identification and brief advice interventions in the section 136 suite with the aim to embed into routine practice and to embed the practice of making referrals to partner integrated drug and alcohol service providers.

Method

A band six nurse was employed to provide alcohol brief interventions, training for others and support physical health checks. All patients using alcohol were asked to complete the AUDIT and if they agreed received a brief alcohol intervention. Information was provided to individuals about services available to help with alcohol dependency and sign post individuals to services.

Results

The project ran from January to June 2014. 368 patients came through the section 136 suite; 125 were intoxicated. Of these 108 (87%) agreed to receive a brief alcohol intervention.

Discussion & Conclusion

This was a pilot to establish whether patients agreed to the intervention and to explore the feasibility of staff training in this intervention. By the end of the pilot staff

were routinely offering the intervention. We now aim to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

References

1. A retrospective cohort study describing six months of admissions under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act; the problem of alcohol misuse.
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