POSITION STATEMENT:
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Roles
Outcomes Evaluation and Management

Introduction
Outcome evaluation and management (OEM) is an accountability method that can be used to drive the process of balancing quality and cost of clinical health care service delivery. The collection and interpretation of outcome data is critical to survival within the healthcare system. As the evolving managed healthcare system continues to build momentum, it is imperative that the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) promote OEM as a strategy that will demonstrate efficacy of and enhance accountability and legitimacy for psychiatric-mental health (PMH) nursing practice.

Background/Framework
Outcome evaluation and management (OEM) is a multidimensional process which can be studied using a framework for health care evaluation research that employs the concepts of structure, process, and outcomes (Bloch, 1975; Donabedian, 1976). The effect of setting- and provider-specific variables (structure) upon provider actions (processes) can be related to changes in the recipient of care (outcomes) through this evaluation method. Outcomes are studied at individual as well as population levels. These concepts will improve practice by enhancing our understanding of the context within which treatment and services are provided. OEM will aid in developing and contributing to nursing knowledge through theory development and testing.

Psychiatric mental health nurses have critical roles in OEM at both the generalist and specialist levels. At the generalist level, PMH nurses are at the forefront of clinical care delivery, often providing a wide range of direct and indirect services to individuals, families and communities. At the specialty level, PMH nurses may be involved in both direct and indirect clinical service provision as well as in the analysis of aggregate data in order to evaluate programs of clinical care for targeted, "at risk" populations.

The ANA Standards of Care (1994) provides guidance and direction for PMH nursing practice. We must rely on our unique contributions in varied levels and specialty areas to provide the wide range and mix of services that are crucial in today’s complex health care environment. PMH nurses as a specialty group are uniquely poised to provide the type of collaborative, integrative and multi-level clinical care service delivery that will be critical to successful psychiatric programs in the next decade.

Position
The American Psychiatric Nurses Association believes that outcome evaluation offers a critically important approach in determining the "value" of psychiatric-mental health nursing practice. It is essential that psychiatric-mental health nurses play key roles in addressing this effort. The American Psychiatric Nursing Association supports the following efforts:
• Involve APNA members in outcomes evaluation and management at the local, state and national levels.
• Appoint APNA members to national task forces, committees and policy setting groups that are creating the agenda for outcome evaluation and management.
• Provide PMH nurses with education on utilizing outcome evaluation measures in the context of an interdisciplinary team within a variety of patient care setting
• Establish guidelines for the selection of outcome evaluation tools, services and techniques for psychiatric-mental health.
• Promote the use of valid and reliable data for the measurement and evaluation of nursing-sensitive indicators within the provision of PMH services.
• Collaborate with the American Nurses Association, the Society for Education and Research in Psychiatric Nursing (SERPN), and other PMH nursing organizations in collecting, measuring and interpreting PMH nursing-sensitive indicators

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Bibliography


Authors
Outcome Task Force 1997-98 - Carol J. Cornwell (Co-chair)
Pamela E. Marcus
Beth Maree
George Byron Smith (Co-chair)
Mark Soucy