

## CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

### **Psychogeriatric SOS: A unique clinician-to-clinician web-based service for rural and remote clinicians**

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#### **Background:**

Rural mental health services are under-resourced and over-burdened. Given the aging population and escalating health costs, we need to innovate to solve this resourcing crisis. Psychogeriatric SOS is a unique service that offers information, advice, supervision, training, education and case conferencing to rural and remote clinicians working with older adults across all disciplines, allowing them to establish a supportive professional relationship with our psychogeriatric multidisciplinary team via a web-conferencing platform. This nascent service has the potential to be a pathway for more efficient use of time for primary clinicians and specialty psychogeriatric services.

#### **Aims:**

To describe rural clinician/user demographics, delineate how this model satisfies unmet clinician professional needs, and determine whether it improves clinician confidence. It will also provide a forum in which members of the Australian GP community can make comments and suggestions.

#### **Methods:**

Rural and remote clinicians in three under-resourced local health districts in NSW and one NGO were provided this service in 2015. During the first 12 months, demographic data, uptake rates, user satisfaction, and pre- and post- intervention clinician confidence measures were collected.

#### **Results:**

100 registrants participated in a combination of 15 education forums, 25 case conferences and 14 supervision sessions. Confidence questionnaires indicated confidence depended on clinician, context of practice, and number of years practicing (with those having worked 1-5 years being the most confident followed by those having worked more than 21 years). The most prominent areas of need identified by clinicians were educating patients' carers, and education and case conferencing around clinical psychogeriatric issues. All users returned to use the service more than once.

**Conclusion:**

There is a need for the Psychogeriatric SOS model of e-health rural outreach, which may constitute a step towards the more efficient and effective use of mental health resources in rural and remote Australia.

