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Mental health recovery: A review of the peer-reviewed published literature

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Summary The concept of mental health recovery promotes collaborative partnership among consumers, carers and service providers. However views on mental health recovery are less explored among carers and service providers. The aim of this review was to analyse contemporary literature exploring views of mental health consumers, carers and service providers in relation to their understanding of the meaning of mental health recovery and factors influencing mental health recovery. The literature review questions were: How is mental health recovery and factors influencing mental health recovery viewed by consumers, carers and service providers? What are the differences and similarities in those perceptions? How can the outcomes and recommendations inform the Australian mental health practices? A review of the literature used selected electronic databases and specific search terms and supplemented with manual searching. Twenty-six studies were selected for review which included qualitative, mixed method, and quantitative approaches and a Delphi study. The findings indicated that the concept of mental health recovery is more explored among consumers and is seldom explored

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among carers and service providers. The studies suggested that recovery from mental illness is a multidimensional process and the concept cannot be defined in rigid terms. In order to achieve the best possible care, the stakeholders require flexible attitudes and openness to embrace the philosophy.

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1. Introduction

The concept of mental health recovery has been a topic of discussion for decades in mental health settings. Collaboration and partnership among consumers, carers and service providers are underpinning principles of mental health recovery. However, to this end, the concept has been less explored among carers and service providers.

Mental health recovery has been defined by service providers and consumers in various ways (Anthony, 1993; Davidson, 2003; Deegan, 1988; Lloyd, Waghorn, & Williams, 2008; Piat et al., 2009; Ridgeway, 2001; Schrank & Slade, 2007; Slade, 2009; Slade, Amering, & Oades, 2008). Slade (2009) distinguished mental health recovery as personal recovery versus clinical recovery. Slade (2009) asserts that clinical recovery is different to personal recovery, as clinical recovery emerged from the expertise of service providers and personal recovery emerged from people with lived experience of mental illness.

This paper outlines a thorough search of literature that includes mental health consumers, and/or carers and/or service providers. Types of studies included are peer-reviewed research. The aims were to look at the extent of research that examined the views of mental health consumers, carers and service providers on mental health recovery and factors influencing mental health recovery and identify the similarities and differences in the views and its relevance in the Australian mental health practices. This review is part of a study that explores the views of mental health consumers, carers and mental health nurses on mental health recovery and the factors influencing mental health recovery. Given the views of mental health recovery often differs from person to person, it follows that there will be differences in understanding what recovery means to the above cohort. Understanding various views on mental health recovery will enable better collaboration of services and may meet expectations of consumers, carers and service providers.

2. Method

The databases used to search for relevant articles were ASAP, Best Practice, CINAHL, Cochrane Systematic Review, EMBASE, Joanna Briggs, Medline, OVID, Proquest, PsychINFO and SCOPUS. The search terms used were: "mental health recovery" AND "meaning" OR "perspective/s" OR "definition" AND "client" OR "consumers" OR "patient" OR "service users" OR "carers" OR "family" OR "professionals OR Nurs*" OR "service providers" (Table 1).

The review was conducted in 2013. Publications matching the search terms were selected. Primary parameters for the search were: English language, full text articles, published between 2005 and 2013 and adults (aged 18

years+). Articles including recovery from other medical disorders, children and forensic patients were excluded from the review. The initial search for recovery articles retrieved 26,784 publications. 26,531 articles were excluded based on title, relevance and language. 253 abstracts were retrieved to review the aims, population and relevance. Based on the literature review aim 18 full text articles were selected and the rest of the 8 articles were obtained by manually searching the reference list of the selected articles. Fig. 1 describes the article search reduction process.

3. Results

Twenty-six publications were selected for the review, which included a Delphi study, two mixed methodology studies, three quantitative and twenty qualitative studies. The selected records were reviewed and tabulated; Table 2 provides a summary of the selected studies. Fifteen studies explored participants' views of mental health recovery. Six studies explored participants' views on mental health recovery and the factors influencing mental health recovery and five studies explored the factors influencing mental health recovery. The dominant views of consumers, carers, and service providers were identified and are described under results.

3.1. Views about mental health recovery

The majority of the studies (21/26) selected in this review explored the views of consumers in relation to mental health recovery. The review findings suggested there were differing views about mental health recovery among consumers, carers and service providers. However, only limited studies (Noiseux & Ricard, 2008; Noiseux et al., 2010) are available to underscore this assertion. The findings showed significant differences among consumers' and carers' views in terms of mental health recovery. For example, consumers' experiences and views of mental health recovery did not match with carers' views as carers were more focused on outcomes or absence of symptoms and/or improved functioning in the community. Whereas, consumers were more inclined to the concept that mental health recovery is a multidimensional process which focus on having meaning in life and transformation. Four studies (Aston & Coffey, 2012; Ng, Pearson, & Chen, 2008; Ng, Pearson, Chen, & Law, 2011) explored the views of service providers on mental health recovery and showed the differences in their views. For example, some service providers views were more in line with return to pre-illness state and/or cessation of medication whereas the others seen mental health recovery as a process.

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