

Implementing WWWT into standard postnatal care: a translational formative evaluation

Heather Rowe¹, Karen Wynter¹, Jane Fisher¹

¹Jean Hailes Research Unit, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

Email: heather.rowe@monash.edu

Objectives/Background

Implementing What Were We Thinking (WWWT), an evidence-based mental health program, into standard postpartum care requires changes among parents, health care providers, health services and health systems. The objective was to establish the practitioner, organisational and health system changes necessary for WWWT scaling up.

Methods

Following the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) Guidance for evaluating complex interventions, we conducted a translational formative evaluation using mixed methods, including collection and analysis of government documents and the academic literature, semi-structured interviews, an online survey and group discussions with parents, clinicians, health service managers and government policy makers. Interview and focus group data were analysed thematically, and descriptive statistics were computed for survey results.

Results

The findings documented current clinical practice, barriers to change, staff training needs, necessary service modifications to standardise advice to parents and include fathers, staff learning needs to inform the WWWT Training Program, the key priorities and drivers of government health policy, and informed a model of costs and expected health and social outcomes for an economic analysis of WWWT.

Discussion/Conclusions

Implementation of WWWT into routine postnatal care requires adjustments to clinical practice and has economic implications for the health system, including staff training and changed service provision. The results informed the protocols for a cluster RCT and health economic evaluation and will be essential in considerations about scaling up WWWT to make this innovative mental health promotion program available to all Australian new parents and support positive outcomes for families.

Rowe H, Wynter K, Burns J, Fisher J. A complex postnatal mental health intervention: Australian translational formative evaluation. *Health Promotion International*; published online 7 January 2016

Wynter K, Rowe H, Burns J, Fisher J. Prevention of postnatal mental health problems: a survey of Victorian Maternal and Child Health nurses *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* 2015; 33(1): 29-37.

Key words translation, implementation, prevention