MANAGER PERCEPTIONS, UNDERSTANDING AND FUTURE EXPECTATIONS OF THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST ROLE WITHIN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Jessica Moore
BACKGROUND

- The constant change process within the NHS has brought with it some ambiguity, including a lack of clarity regarding professional roles within the NHS across different professional groups (Connolly & Jones, 2003).

- The absence of role clarity in the workplace can lead to possible negative repercussions (Sutherland & Cooper, 2000; Kauppila, 2014).

- CAMHS- Taylor (2015) identified that one of the core components that contributes to the delivery of a good quality CAMHS service is CAMHS managers using staff in an efficient manner.
AIMS

The aims of this study were as follows:

- To establish CAMHS managers’ perceptions and understanding of the role of a clinical psychologist within their service
- To establish what CAMHS managers’ future expectations are of the clinical psychologist role
**METHOD**

- **Design**
  - Qualitative study
  - Semi-structured interviews:
    - held at each participant’s place of work
    - lasted approximately 1 hour
  - Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

- **Recruitment**
  - Recruitment emails sent out to all managers within CAMHS. Services changes meant this was the only way of recruiting at this time.
  - 3 participants recruited from 3 different CAMHS teams: male and female, aged 29-45, between 2-5 years managerial experience.
RESULTS

Four key themes were identified from a thematic analysis of interview transcripts, these were as follows:

- Initial mystery of the clinical psychologist role
- Current support for managers
- Leadership: The future ideal
- Negative perceptions of clinical psychologists within CAMHS
"I hadn’t ever seen a psychologist, it’s like a mythical thing that you just get put on a waiting list and never really saw them so I didn’t know what they did" (Amy)

- What is it that psychologists do aside from dealing with complex 1:1 work and groups?
- Closer working with clinical psychologists can enhance understanding of the psychologist role
- Some uncertainty still present
CURRENT SUPPORT FOR MANAGERS

“the psychology voice, or the clinical voice is more...is more necessary than a managerial voice of ‘you just need to do them’...in terms of why are we doing it and what’s the value and how we embed that into our practice I think that’s where I would look to psychology” (Chris).

Clinical psychologists help to...
- Communicate decisions or justifications for change
- ‘Skill up’, as well as take pressure off, the staff team
- Manage team dynamics

Nonetheless, Barbara acknowledged that managers would “like to be able to just lean on them [clinical psychologists] a little bit more” for support.
Leadership: The Future Ideal

“What we’re trying to say is unless this needs a management decision there is lots of other people, you know, because a clinical psychologist gets paid more than a team manager does...” (Barbara)

Ideas of what leadership might look like differed across participants:

- Amy- clinical psychologists to educate the staff team, providing professional challenge in the team and help to “cover the gaps” between services.

- Barbara- clinical psychologists to both chair, and represent CAMHS at, meetings; be more available to service managers day-to-day.

- Chris- clinical psychologists to work parallel with managers and provide challenge on service plans, to continue supporting managers in effecting change.
NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS WITHIN CAMHS

Two subthemes:

- Nurse role vs psychologist role:
  
  “…it’s those things I mentioned about swanning in and swanning out, getting paid so much more and all you do is come and sit and talk to people for an hour whereas we’re here for 14 and a half hours…” (Amy).

- Nurses feel an injustice about their work load compared to clinical psychologists’ workload.
- Leads to difficult team dynamics for managers to deal with.
NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS WITHIN CAMHS (2)

- Hierarchical attitudes:
  “their argument would be that actually that’s taking them away from what they’re...they’re...they’re “very expensive”...” (Barbara)

- Hierarchical attitudes were identified as being present when clinical psychologists were asked to do jobs outside of their clinical work, as well as in what expectations psychologists hold regarding career progression.

- Perceived hierarchical processes within some CAMHS services, such as handing complex cases over to psychologists.

- Difficult team dynamics for managers to contend with.
SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

What could be helpful moving forward:-

- Clinical Psychologists to disseminate information to managers and wider CAMHS team regarding their role.
- Opportunities for shadowing of, and joint working with, clinical psychologists.
- Opportunities for shadowing of, and joint working with, managers.
- Clinical psychologists to continue to offer support to managers, perhaps with more of a leadership emphasis.

- Future of Clinical Psychology within CAMHS
DISCUSSION

- Limitations
  - Sample size
  - Trust specific
  - Censorship

- Future Research
  - Do changes lead to enhanced understanding of clinical psychologist role?
  - Do changes help overcome negative perceptions of clinical psychologist role?
  - Replication across bigger sample size
  - Replication across more services
REFERENCES


Thank you for listening, any questions?