

Title Theme 6 Chronic conditions

Developing a psychosocial intervention for sleep problems presenting to primary care (REST: Resources for Effective Sleep Treatment)

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Purpose and theory

Sleep problems are common, chronic and comorbid affecting 40% of the population and associated with physical and psychological morbidity. Hypnotic drugs are often prescribed inappropriately with limited benefits and significant risks of adverse effects. Attempts to improve prescribing rates had failed because of practitioner and patient attitudes, lack of organisational support or systems for change.

Methods

We worked with service users, primary care teams and pharmacists in Lincolnshire, a large rural county in the East Midlands of the UK. We used questionnaires to GPs and patients to understand current management of insomnia and then worked with 8 collaborative practices using rapid experimentation cycles, focus groups of patients and practitioners to understand more fully and overcome the barriers and facilitators to managing sleep problems. We introduced and modelled novel methods of managing sleep problems in primary care using sleep assessment tools and modified cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBTi).

Findings

By using a combination of surveys, focus groups and action research methods we were able to model and design a psychosocial intervention, modified CBTi, for management of sleep problems presenting to primary care teams and suitable for formal experimental testing.