

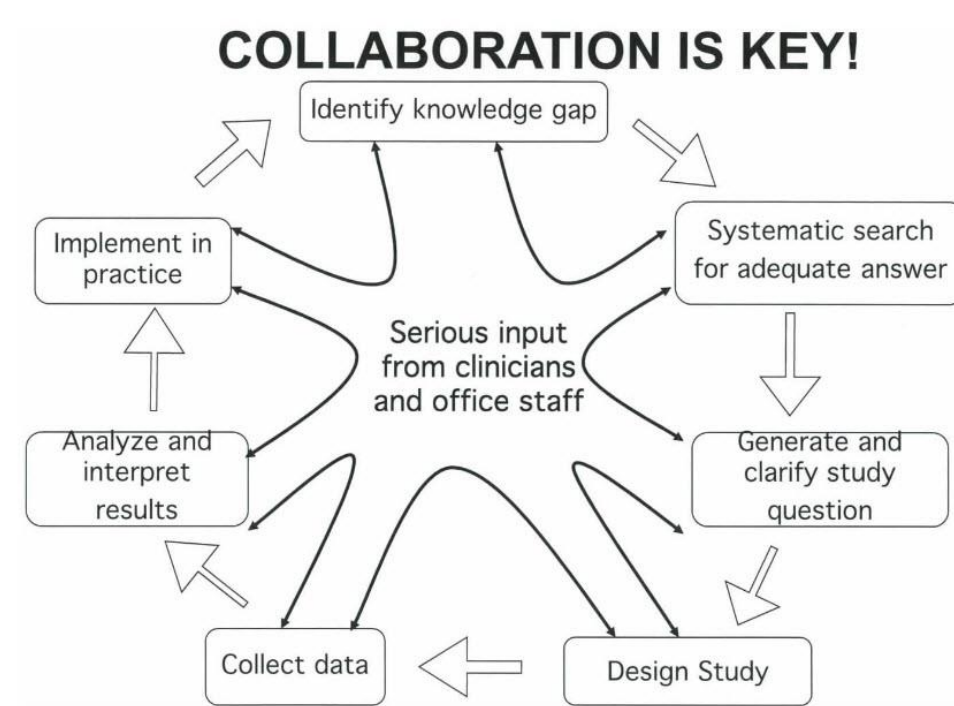
Background

A PBRN is a group of 15 to several hundred healthcare practices devoted primarily to the care of patients. These practices are united by a shared commitment to expand the science base of clinical care through systematic inquiry to better understand the health and health care events that unfold daily in their community practice settings.

In this poster we describe the formation and implementation of the South Texas Psychiatric Practice-Based Research Network (**STX PSYCH PBRN**) and the results of its initial efforts. The South Texas Psychiatric PBRN is a network of practicing psychiatrist who collaborate with UTHSCSA researchers to answer meaningful questions that will improve practice and patient care. The Network is composed of 72 psychiatrist located in San Antonio and the South Texas region. PBRNs have been recognized as excellent tools for conducting a variety of research activities in primary care (1,2). In psychiatry, PBRNs have been proposed as potential platforms for mental health services research (3). They can be designed to attempt to answer practice-based questions and interests such as types of patient symptomatology, clinician use of different treatment measures, practice characteristics (demographics, insurance status, etc.), treatment compliance and others.

Methods

The STX PSYCH PBRN operates in an egalitarian method where ideas are presented to the group by other members and after discussion, projects are developed and designed overtime.



The network holds a total of 6 meetings a year with quarterly All-Member meetings and Bi-annual Executive Committee meetings. The meetings allow for open forums about real world clinical issues. The meetings also serve as a chance to review current research findings and implications in the field. The network has the unique ability to focus on questions and issues that are directly related to the members' clinical experiences. This allows for a quick and effective method of investigating these topics and being able to translate the data collected into meaningful information that our members can then use to improve their own patients' care.

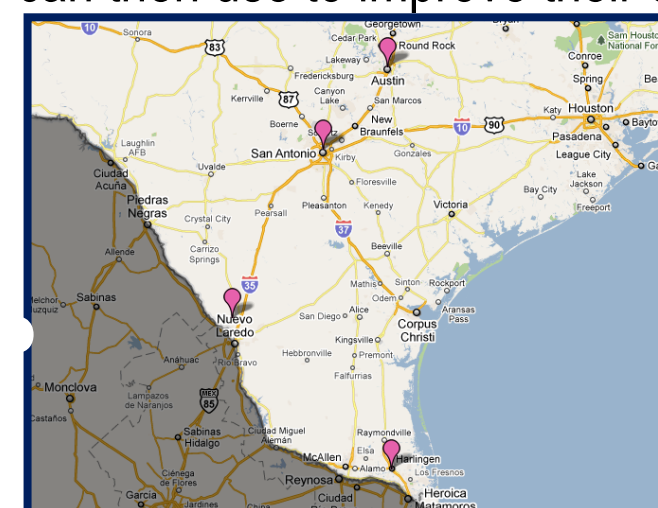


Figure 1. South Texas/Northeast Mexico Border Region

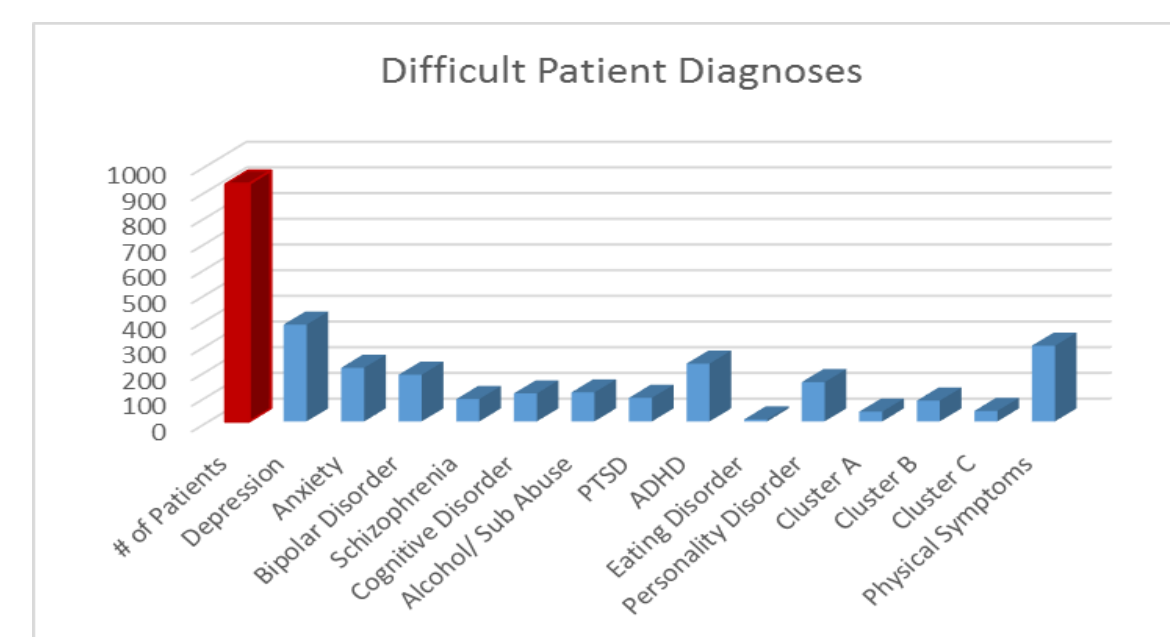
Results

The STX PSYCH PBRN has worked in collaboration with the PBRN Resource Center to conduct the following studies:

Study #1 – Negative Reactions – Simple card study to examine the occurrence of a “negative reaction” to patients in daily practice in order to gauge network member commitment and network functionality. 11 psychiatrist documented setting, primary diagnosis and if they had a negative reaction to their patient. 501 Cards were filled out following the visit regardless of negative reaction to the patient.

Figure 2. Negative Reaction Card Study

Study #2 – Difficult Patients – A card study to investigate the prevalence of “difficult patients” experienced by their psychiatrist and to assess the association of difficulty with physical and mental disorder, functional impairment, health care utilization, and satisfaction with medical care. 23 psychiatrist collected patient demographics, complexity of diagnosis, personality attributes, behavior and specific treatment variables. Psychiatrist variables included demographics, years in practice, practice setting and workload.



Study #3 – SSRI Study –The purposes of this study are to examine the likelihood that patients who do not respond well to SSRI's or SNRI's may be predicted by personality and family history variables that may be moderated by genotype, predict activation syndrome side effects and increased drive to alcohol. 12 Psychiatrists completed a total of 243 patient cards on a study of the clinical progress of 234 patients receiving SSRI's or SNRI's for the treatment of anxiety, depression, PTSD, or OCD. The study collected data on current medications, past history of SSRI/SNRI use, general outcomes of treatment for symptoms in the anxiety and depression spectrum, and for evidence of any symptoms suggesting an activation syndrome. Patients also completed a brief survey of about themselves, medication treatment, family

history of mental illness and current patterns of alcohol consumption. Saliva was collected to permit DNA tests for the Long/Short polymorphism of the serotonin transporter gene. Due to low enrollment, the study was recently expanded to BAMC to recruit a military population of service members.

Study # 4 – Polypharmacy Decision Making – Prospective longitudinal study to examine decision making process for the justification of use of polypharmacy by psychiatrists in the South Texas Psychiatry Practice-Based Research Network. Currently recruiting psychiatrist.

Conclusions

- In conclusion, participation in the STX PSYCH PBRN has proven to be successful in the development, design, implementation and execution of clinically relevant studies of interest to network members and to the community we serve . By addressing these clinical psychiatric issues the member psychiatrist have been able to improve their practice and the overall wellbeing of their patient population.

Furthermore, the network has also provided our members with the chance to gain a better understanding of our patient population, make a professional contribution to the psychiatric community, increase personal contact and networking with colleagues.

Additionally, participation in the STX PSYCH PBRN contributes towards UTHSCSA clinical faculty hours as well as the earning of CME credits, contribution to scientific knowledge and improvement of patient care.

Member Quotes



"I participate in the PBRN because it gives me an opportunity to apply skills (critical, rigorous thinking and writing) that are different from the day in day out skills of clinical care. We can develop studies which can answer clinically relevant questions and at the same time enhance our clinical care. It is a win-win situation."
–Randal Sellers, M.D. San Antonio, TX

References

- Lanier D: Primary care practice-based research comes of age in the United States. Annals of Family Medicine 3: S2-S4, 2005
- Westfall JM, Mold J, Fagnan, L: Practice-based research – “Blue Highways” on the NIH Roadmap. The Journal of the American Medical Association 297: 403-406, 2007
- McMillen JC, Lenze SL, Hawley KM, and Osborne VA: Revisiting Practice-Based Research Networks as a platform for mental health services research. Adm Policy Mental Health 36: 308-321, 2009