

TITLE - Advancing the Field of APS through Research: An Introduction to the Tool for Risk, Interventions and Outcomes (TRIO)

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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Missing in APS delivery systems is an evidence-based framework to guide social workers in ensuring consistency in practice and improving outcomes for clients served. The TRIO was designed by and for social workers based on established social work practice models. It standardizes investigations and assessments, documents work, measures both client and program outcomes, and assesses risk of future harm. To ensure consistency, the TRIO uses agreed upon terminology embedded in the tool, stated goals and objectives, and a bio-psycho-social approach. The research on investigations and assessments presented in the webinar focused on describing what clients APS serves, how APS serves clients, what APS does, and what outcomes APS achieves. The research presented in the webinar was conducted from 2009-2011 with 2,505 client episodes. The study sample included 73% elders (65+) 65 and 27% dependent adults. Key findings included: 1) clients abused by others have a higher prevalence of risk indicators in family/marital conflict, exploitation. In contrast, self-neglect clients are more likely to have negative indicators in health and hygiene. Risk indicators clustered to form 10 unique profiles with differences in outcomes. There was minimal variation in the percentage of unresolved protective issues by allegation type. Sixty to eighty percent of clients in the study sample received basic interventions like information and education, referrals, and engagement of support systems, with 5-10 % of the study sample requiring a variety of interventions.

This research summary is part of a series sponsored by the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) and the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) joint Research Committee. The purpose of this research summary is to provide direct access to findings in order to enhance practice and clarify policy choices.

PRACTICE & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

APS clients present complex challenges to APS systems in engaging clients and having the necessary resources in the community to address the elimination or reduction of risk. The presented research showed no significant difference in recurrence rate by age: clients aged 80+ returned at the same rate as those aged 65-79. Gender was not associated with actual recurrence. Refusing help and an APS history are global risk factors that cut across allegation types for unresolved protective issue. Other risk factors found in self neglect clients include lack of social supports and confusion. In clients abused by others, family conflict, shame and guilt were key individual risk factors. Having a history of APS referrals, living alone, refusing help and not substantially engaging in available APS interventions were all significantly related to an increase in a client experiencing an unresolved protective issue. As a single risk indicator, lack of social support more than doubled the odds of recurrence among self-neglect clients. Clients fell into two distinct groups: acceptance of extensive engagement with APS and those who did not, with those who had high engagement achieving better outcomes. Allegation driven investigation is less effective than a comprehensive approach. The allegation provides the legal authority to conduct an investigation, but once in the home, workers can better serve clients when they approach the investigation and assessment in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

FURTHER READING

Sommerfeld D., Henderson, L., Snider, M., Aarons, G. (2015). "Multidimensional Measurement Within Adult Protective: Design and Initial Testing of the Tool for Risk, Interventions, and Outcomes." *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 26:495-522. This is an open source article.

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