

Productivity Commission Submission from InnoWell

What is the current mental health sector context?

There are a number of issues that we expect the Commission will hear about, including:

1. The overwhelming amount of service options offered in government and non-government funded services (generally in urban areas) and that sometimes this sheer choice without information can be a barrier to a person receiving care.
2. The lack of services in rural, remote, regional and outer metropolitan areas.
3. The fragmentation of services across private, state and federally-funded services.
4. The propensity for services to act in silos due to the lack of interoperable information systems that allow for two way sharing of information.
5. Funding models that promote 'activity-based' service development and data systems – occasions of service are easy to count but do not provide any information about effectiveness or outcomes.
6. Mental health determinants extend beyond health and include social, environment, culture, education and employment/ purpose in society.

What reform is required in the mental health sector?

Systems are required that support integration both within and across service settings, promote a holistic view and are outcome focussed, and assist people to understand their own health status and the self-management and service care options available to them.

Twenty-first century technology-enabled solutions are now essential for augmenting face-to-face and online mental health services, to ensure people get the right care at the right time.

The InnoWell Platform

The InnoWell Platform is a configurable digital tool to assist assessment, monitoring and management of mental health issues, and maintenance of wellbeing. It does this by collecting personal and health information (data) from consumers and their service providers. This information is collated and reported back to consumers and their health professionals to promote collaborative care. The clinical content is determined by the service provider who invites the consumer to use the Platform. Importantly, the Platform does not provide stand-alone medical or health advice, diagnosis or treatment. Instead it guides and supports consumers and their health professionals to decide what may be suitable self-care and service provider care options.

Multi-dimensional assessment

Mental health issues typically co-occur with other health and social problems, that if not adequately addressed, can often have a lasting impact on a person's life (Insel & Fenton, 2005; Patel *et al* 2007; Spring *et al* 2012). Multi-dimensional assessment refers to the assessment of needs across a range

of domains, including mental health, physical health, suicidal thoughts and behaviours, alcohol and/or other drug use, social health and levels of daily functioning. Broad assessment helps the person and their treating health professional to understand the range and severity of their needs, and helps guide the planning of appropriate treatments and interventions.

Importantly, the InnoWell Platform has been co-designed and developed with people with a lived experience of mental health issues, health professionals and service providers, and is based on the principles of multi-dimensional assessment as well as 'staged care', shared decision making and routine outcome monitoring.

A smart data system

As a 21st century technology-enabled solution for *right care, right time*, the InnoWell Platform is also a smart data system that holds longitudinal consumer metrics (eg. demographics, medical and psychological history, current symptoms and function, etc), health professional metrics (eg. clinician demographics, clinical assessment information, clinician-supported care options, etc) as well as comparative aggregated service-level clinical safety and service quality metrics (eg. wait times, efficiency, outcomes, etc). While consumer and health professional data is so important in providing *right care, right time*, and allowing evidence-based decisions to be made, the InnoWell Platform's aggregated service-level metrics could be used in the future to guide funding agencies (eg. government, Primary Health Networks, etc) in their evaluation of programmatic offerings.

Implementation of the InnoWell Platform

Currently, the InnoWell Platform is being implemented in multiple primary health youth services, a veterans and families counselling service, and a telephone/ online-based service. Over the next 18 months, ongoing implementations will be focused on outer-urban, regional and rural services; while in parallel, the InnoWell Platform will be continuously and iteratively co-designed and developed with different services, settings and populations across the lifespan. Specifically, this will include young children and their families, adults through to older adults and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

New and emerging health information technologies have the potential to realise significant improvements in mental health service quality and safety. It is clear that evidence-based, person-centered care solutions and systems, focussed on the individuals needs while at the same time understanding that health determinants extend beyond health alone, are required and can be delivered using technology. The question remaining – *What is the appetite for real mental health service reform that addresses these underlying issues and future proofs the solution?*

Yours sincerely,

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