

Q. I HAVE RECENTLY STARTED WORK FOR A CHARITY AND WOULD LIKE TO MEASURE THE OUTCOMES OF THE THERAPY SERVICE WE ARE PROVIDING. CAN THE FHT MAKE ANY SUGGESTIONS?



Karen Young, FHT editor and communications manager, says:

There are a number of measurement tools available, but two often used by FHT members are MYMOP and MYCAW. MYMOP (Measure Yourself Medical Outcome Profile) is a person-centred questionnaire developed by Dr Charlotte Patterson, an experienced GP, practitioner of acupuncture and Chinese medicine, and honorary senior research fellow at University of Bristol. The initial MYMOP questionnaire is completed during the consultation, with the client identifying one or two related symptoms that they would like help with, such as 'pain across my lower back' and 'pain down my left leg'. They can also choose a daily activity that the problem limits or prevents them from doing, such as

'walking to the local shops'. These choices are written down in the client's own words and they score the severity of each over the past week, on a scale of 0 to 6, with 0 indicating 'as good as it could be' and 6 'as bad as it could be'.

On the follow-up questionnaires, the wording of the previously chosen items remain the same ('pain across my lower back') and the client once again scores each choice on a scale of 0 to 6.

The form also asks about medication use because, for a number of clients, reducing the amount of medication they are taking for a problem will be a key treatment objective.

The advantages of MYMOP are that it is quick and easy to complete, sensitive to change, and identifies what is most important to the client. Its simplicity also makes it easy to chart the scores of individual patients over time, and it has been used successfully by both orthodox and complementary practitioners.

A disadvantage of MYMOP is that it is problem/symptom-specific, so it's not suitable for clients who can't identify their

'most important problem'. The seven-day timescale also makes it unsuitable for less frequent problems, such as migraines or menstrual problems.

The forms are available, free of charge, at the University of Bristol website: bris.ac.uk/primaryhealthcare/resources/mymop. It is important that the layout and wording of the MYMOP forms aren't changed and anyone using MYMOP must read the accompanying 'instructions for administration and scoring'. Those using MYMOP in audit, evaluation or research studies are also asked to register as a user.

To help you use MYMOP correctly, there are some FAQs available on the website, along with three excellent training videos featuring Dr Patterson.

If you are evaluating complementary therapies in cancer care, MYCAW (Measure Yourself Concerns and Wellbeing) may be a more appropriate tool. It is an adaptation of MYMOP and while very similar, contains elements that may be more relevant to this client group (and a number of others).

Again, the forms and guidance can be accessed on the university website.

Ask an expert

KAREN YOUNG AND BEVERLY BARTLETT ADVISE ON MEASURING OUTCOMES AND INSURANCE



Q. I AM STUDYING REFLEXOLOGY AND - IN RETURN FOR PROVIDING TASTER TREATMENTS AT AN EVENT - I WOULD LIKE TO ASK PEOPLE TO DONATE MONEY TO A CHARITY THE ORGANISERS ARE SUPPORTING. SOMEONE MENTIONED THAT THIS COULD BE AN INSURANCE ISSUE - PLEASE COULD YOU CLARIFY?



Beverly Bartlett, FHT membership and insurance services manager, says:

It is a condition of the FHT's medical malpractice, public and products liability insurance that members who are 'unqualified' in (studying) a therapy recognised by the FHT must:

- Inform each client, prior to treatment, that they are unqualified in that therapy
- 'Make no charge for the treatment' (see 'Your obligations', section 1d, of the policy wording at fht.org.uk/insurance).

Our underwriters, Hiscox, have confirmed that, providing every penny donated goes to the charity, this would not be classed as 'charging' for treatment, and would in no way impact your insurance cover.

PICTURE: ISTOCK