

2021/21 Annual Evaluation Report for the Collaborative Mentorship Network

Executive Summary

The Alberta College of Family Physicians (ACFP), with the support of a Health Canada Substance Use and Chronic Pain program grant, established the Collaborative Mentorship Network (CMN) for Chronic Pain and Addiction to connect healthcare providers that treat and support patients with chronic pain and/or substance use disorders in Alberta. The CMN aims to provide healthcare providers with access to mentors, evidence-based tools and resources, and knowledge translation opportunities. The CMN is funded by Health Canada from June 2020 to July 2023.

Over the past fiscal year (April 1, 2021- March 31, 2022), the CMN provided learning activities and educational opportunities with outcomes in three main areas: (1) self reported practice outcomes, (2) CMN educational programs, and (3) effectiveness of the mentorship program.

The CMN contracted a third-party evaluation consulting agency to survey and interview members about the effectiveness of the CMN resources at enhancing their knowledge, increasing their confidence, and improving their practice in chronic pain and substance use. Satisfaction with the CMN communications was also assessed. Finally, members in formal mentoring relationships were asked to provide feedback on the program's utility and provided recommendations to improve their mentoring experiences.

The findings presented in the report are drawn from the annual CMN (2021/22) member survey and interviews conducted from January to February 2022. The survey response rate was 29% (N= 313, n=90). Nine interviews were conducted with members from a variety of health disciplines, including, Family Physicians, Pharmacists, Nurses, and mental and social health care providers.

Evaluation Results

Survey respondents reported an increase in their knowledge about chronic pain and/or substance use disorders.



The majority of the CMN members reported gaining knowledge from the CMN learning opportunities. Members reported sharing their learnings with colleagues. On average, 80% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they increased their understanding or learned something new about chronic pain and/or substance.

Participants said that the CMN's learning opportunities meet members' needs.



Most CMN members are satisfied with the CMN's learning activities and found them to be high quality, beneficial, informative, and applicable to their day-to-day patient management and practice. Members suggested that CMN educational offerings and discussions continue to cover root causes and address bio-psycho-social and spiritual components of substance use and chronic pain.

The CMN's activities have increased members' confidence with treating and/or supporting patients with chronic pain and /or substance use disorders.



More than 80% of survey respondents agreed that the Collaboration Forums increased their confidence to provide care for people with chronic pain and/or substance use. Interviewees said this increased confidence came from connecting with a mentor and other professionals and being able to access resources.

CMN members report improvements in their practice.



Members provided examples of how they changed their practice as a result of their involvement with the CMN, including: reduced referrals to specialists, changes in frequently used/prescribed medication for substance use, changed communication approach with patients, and implementing a more effective patient advocacy approach.

CMN's resources and communication meet members' needs.



The majority of survey participants were satisfied with the CMN resources, these include, the resource library (66%), session recordings (78%), Fast Gives (Pearls infographics) (68%), and CMN articles (79%).

Respondents expressed high satisfaction with the Catch-Up Newsletter, direct emails, and coordinator touch base calls.

Participants in the mentorship program are mostly satisfied with the program, but challenges, such as screen fatigue and availability/scheduling persist.



Of those members who participate in mentorship, about 80% said they were satisfied with the support provided by the CMN and their overall mentoring experience. Participants highlighted numerous benefits, such as: access to resources, directly learning from others, having support and reassurance, increased opportunity for self-learning, and a fun and exciting opportunity to teach and help others.

Conclusion

The CMN learning opportunities provided in 2021/22 fulfill the desired outcomes of enhancing knowledge, increasing confidence, and improving care for individuals with chronic pain and substance use issues. The CMN's deliverables meet the diverse needs of most of the members, however, there are opportunities to address the needs of those not currently benefiting much from CMN by improving engagement and attendance.

Recommendations

- Continue to tailor educational offerings to various audiences, (e.g., sessions that touch on root causes, shorter sessions).
 - Continue to communicate and promote CMN's offerings, and target practitioners who might benefit the most from these resources (e.g., new practitioners).
 - Encourage members to share their CMN experience with their colleagues, as a trusted reference is a powerful way to build membership.
 - Identify ways to increase engagement within the Collaboration Forum, as it is not being utilized to its potential.
 - Identify ways for members to network and use collaborative problem solving (e.g., during a session utilize break-out rooms to encourage dialogue and flow of ideas among participants).
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