

The resource allocation decision tool (ReAD-iT): development of items for a web-based instrument to aid evidence-based resource allocation in health care

Tamica Sturgess¹, Terry Haines^{1,2}, Donna Markham¹, Wendy Hubbard³, Kathleen Philip⁴, Jill Walsh¹, Haylee Lane², David Lescai⁴

1 Monash Health, Monash Medical Centre, 246 Clayton Road, Clayton, Victoria, 3168, tamica.sturgess@monashhealth.org

2 Monash University, Wellington Road and Blackburn Road, Clayton, Victoria, 3800

3 Ballarat Health Services, 102 Ascot Street, Ballarat, Victoria, 3350

4 Department of Health and Human Services, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

Background

There are some guiding principles as to how resources in health care can be allocated, however there does not exist an instrument that assists decision makers in health care to consider all the relevant issues that may impact on these decisions. This paper reports on the work undertaken to identify the relevant issues that allied health professionals believe should impact on resource allocation decision making in health care.

Method

Sixty-one real life case study discussions, two hypothetical case study discussions and four group interviews were undertaken using 61 allied health managers and clinicians. Meetings took place in Ballarat, Casey and Melbourne (x2), Victoria. Participants were asked to prepare and discuss a case study about an instance where they had to allocate resources, describing the factors they took into account, where they sourced their information and the strengths and limitations of the approach they used. Hypothetical study summaries were presented to the group (up to 20) and a synthesis of these case studies generated. Group discussion was then held to identify other factors that could be considered in an “ideal world” scenario, and the barriers and enablers to considering each of these different factors discussed.

Results

Factors that were considered to be important when allocating resources in allied health were broken into 11 domains across 3 themes (Impact, Readiness, Appropriateness). Use of research evidence to inform decisions was seen as often being difficult and time consuming to find and interpret, and other sources (personal experiences, local data, comparisons to similar services) were more commonly employed.

Discussion

Allied health managers are regularly faced with making complex and challenging resource allocation decisions, in a healthcare environment whereby they are increasingly accountable for making ends meet and living within their means. A variety of factors for making these decisions has been identified and will be used to inform the content within a web-based resource allocation decision tool (ReAD-iT).