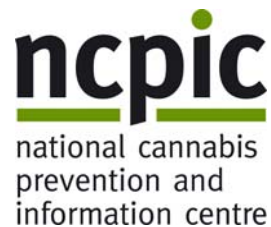


Pathways to treatment for cannabis comorbidity

Connie Donato-Hunt & Ian Flaherty
The Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC)



About DAMEC

Mission statement

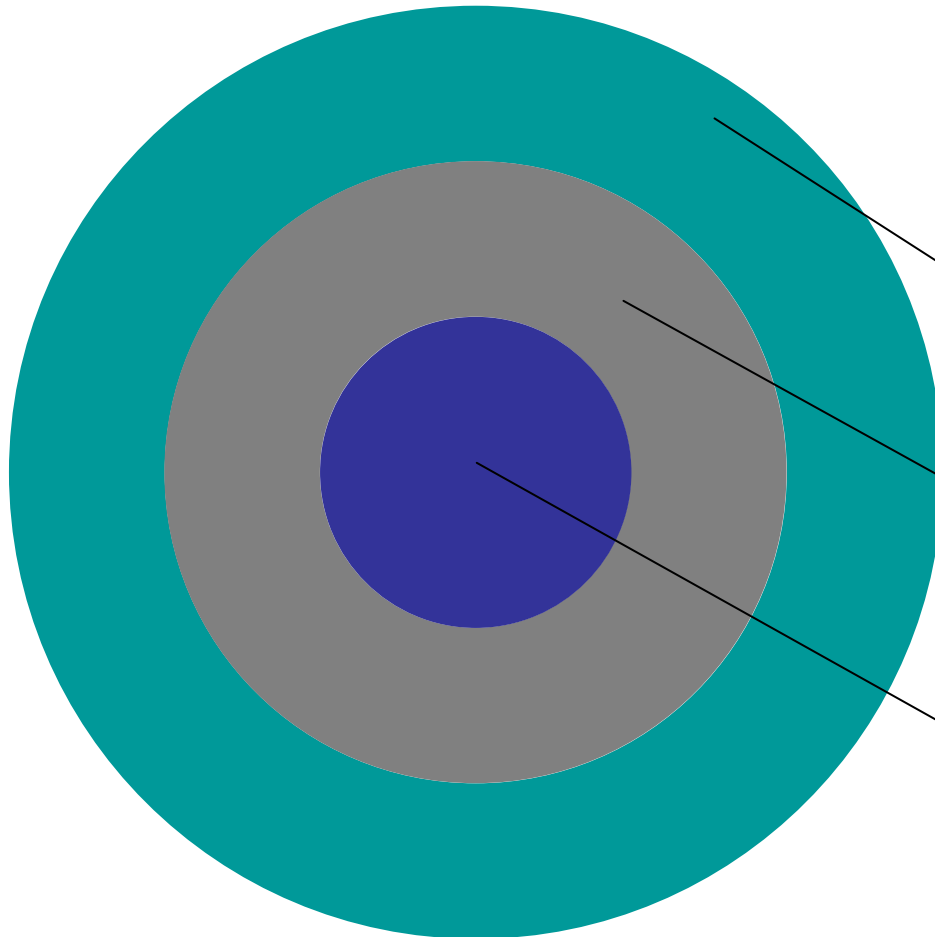
To reduce the harm associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs within culturally and linguistically diverse communities in NSW

About DAMEC

Some current activities

- Counselling service at Liverpool
 - bilingual Arabic & Vietnamese counsellors
 - Vietnamese Transitions worker: intensive case management post-release from prison
- Community projects
- Research and evaluation

DAMEC Research



Areas of investigation:

General population

Rate of D&A use among CALD populations

Substance using population

Needs, barriers, treatment access, family

Treatment population

Access, equity, service quality, clients, family, service providers



D . A . M . E . C

Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre
www.damec.org.au

What is the need among CALD?

1. The rates of substance misuse are generally lower than NSW general population*
2. Despite lower need data suggests those who need treatment are not accessing services
3. People from CALD backgrounds face particular barriers to accessing treatment and receiving equality in service provision

*DAMEC research –2008

Comorbidity Research Project

1. Funded by NGO Drug and Alcohol Mental Health Research Grants program
2. Research question
What are the experiences and pathways to specialist mental health and AOD treatment for CALD clients with comorbid cannabis use disorders and mental illness?
3. Project aims
4. Research design - Qualitative
5. Project commencement October 2008

General challenges

1. Resources, NGO conducting sector wide research
2. Researching marginalised groups
3. Requiring service participation

Progress to date

1. Ethics approval
2. Project plan, literature review, methods
3. Advisory group established and active
4. Approvals to research at various AHS sites
5. Currently applying for other AHS approvals
6. Accessing 2006-2007 minimum data set
7. Contacting NGO services for participation
8. Conducted pilot interviews with workers

Specific project challenges

1. Ethics
2. Access to government services
3. Access to data
4. Engaging services

Emerging themes

1. Variety of referral pathways.
including MERIT, Juvenile Justice, the Police and GPs.
2. Experiences of clients routinely described by workers as inconsistent between primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare.
3. 'Snowball' effect commonly described.
eg: health problems lead to cannabis use and consequent behavioural issues.

Emerging themes

4. Dearth of knowledge among the target group of healthcare options available.
5. 'Ping-pong' effect.
bouncing back and forward of clients between services when needs are unmet
4. Milder symptoms generally result in worse outcomes.
5. Cultural competency + family inclusion + case by case approach = equity of access.

Contact

Connie Donato-Hunt
Senior Research Officer
8113 1304
connie@damec.org.au

Ian Flaherty
Research Officer
8113 1306
ianf@damec.org.au