Needs Assessment
– does one size fit all?

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Summary

• What do we mean by need?
• Framing a needs assessment
• Needs assessment process
• Common problems
What is a needs assessment

Definition

Health needs assessment is the systematic approach to ensuring that the health service uses its resources to improve the health of the population in the most efficient way.

Components of needs assessment

Need – The capacity to benefit from an intervention
Supply – The available health care to provide the intervention
Demand - The expressed need for intervention

* Wright, Williams and Wilkinson BMJ1998;316:1310-1313
**Bradshaw’s Taxonomy**

**Normative**: need which is identified according to a norm (or standard), usually set by experts.
- E.g IOTN 3(6-10)/4 /5

**Felt**: need which people feel - that is, need from the perspective of the people who have it

**Expressed**: need which people say they have (Demand)

**Comparative**: problems which emerge by comparison with others
- Health inequalities
- Competing priorities for scarce resources

Bradshaw’s Taxonomy

Needs assessment – does one size fit all?

- Normative Need
- Felt Need
- Expressed Need
Comparative Need

Compare capacity to benefit between different population groups

- Geographic areas
- Deprivation quintiles
- Ethnicity
- Gender

Compare population capacity to benefit from different interventions

- Orthodontics
- Special care dentistry
- Oral surgery
- Restorative care
Components of needs assessment

- Unrecognised need
- Waiting lists
- Unwilling recipients
- Over capacity
- Want but not need
- Private treatment
Framing the needs assessment

Questions from commissioners?
• How should we allocate scarce resources?
• Are we buying enough X to meet the populations needs?
• Are the services in the right place?
• Why have we got huge waiting times for treatment?
• What are the resource implications of meeting population need?

Questions for commissioners
• What perspective
• How are we defining need?
• What standards are we measuring need against?
Orthodontic Data Sources

Population data
• Office National Statistics and projections
• Local Authority population modelling

Normative need data - population prevalence estimates
• ‘Rule of thirds’
• Survey data

Treatment Need in 12 year old children in England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>In Treatment</th>
<th>Need Treatment</th>
<th>Total ‘need’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>CDHS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>Survey 12 YO</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>CDHS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Orthodontic Data Sources

Felt need
Survey data

Child dental Health Survey
2008/09 Survey of 12 year olds oral health

Activity Data (Supply and Demand)

• Business Services Authority data
  - Dental Assurance Framework reports

• Hospital data

• Waiting list data.
Needs assessment cycle

Commissioning Cycle

Orthodontic MCN

Generate Questions

Stakeholder engagement

Framing

Core report

Data Collection and analysis

Supplemental report

Audit

Data collection

Data standardisation

Needs assessment – does one size fit all?
Common criticisms of needs assessments

The data is wrong
  - Population
  - Epidemiology
  - Activity
  - waiting list

Data is out of date

Data is not comparable
  - Primary v Secondary activity data

Does not include X item of interest
Does one size fit all?

Benefits to identifying core elements across a large geography

- Economies of scale
- Common methodology
- Easy to update
- Relatively quick
- Start the discussion

Needs assessments need to be responsive and flexible to address specific local issues

A core needs assessment can be the jumping off point for valuable local work.
Conclusion

• Needs assessment should be an iterative process rather than a single time bound product
• Often messy, only as good as the questions posed and the data available
• Intrinsically linked to Contract management and Quality improvement activity
Thank you

Questions?