

Paediatric Assessment Clinic for Drug & Alcohol Clinical Services: PAC4DACS

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Background: Drug and Alcohol Clinical Service (DACS), clients are a vulnerable population with a high level of socio-economic disadvantage. 27% of clients at DACS identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Due to financial pressures, poor health literacy, single parenting and other complex factors, our clients can find the health system complicated to navigate, impacting their child's chance at Paediatric assessment or ongoing care.

Description of Model of Care / Intervention: The aim of this service was to improve access and client satisfaction for Paediatric health services through respectful, trauma-informed, client-centred care provision. This was achieved by providing timely Paediatric Assessments in a co-located clinic where the family already accessed DAC services. The simplified process of referral negated the need to pay for a GP appointment, allowing DACS clinicians already involved in the family's care to directly refer to PAC4DACS. This stands to benefit the entire health system as the earlier we can identify health and development concerns for a child, long term outcomes are improved.

Effectiveness: We will present mixed methods analyses from families and referrers regarding acceptability and feasibility. Importantly we feedback on our clients' needs and summarise changes made based on feedback. We also summarise patient demographics, wait times and follow up details further informing needs in this area, including for future growth.

Conclusion and Next Steps: Initially offered only to families in the Child, Youth and Family division of DACS, we have now expanded the service to include more families within DACS. The plan is to continue expansion into more DAC services using a staged approach.

Implications for Practice or Policy: Public Drug & Alcohol Services need a standard provision of Paediatric service care. Simple, accessible paediatric services with extra supports ensure that these children do not 'slip through the gaps.'

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