

# Benchmarks for Primary Care Counselling Services



## Assessment Outcomes

### CORE Partnership

The CORE Partnership consists of the CORE Benchmarking/User Network, the CORE System Trust (responsible for the copyright of CORE measures), CORE Information Management Systems Ltd (CORE IMS - responsible for change agency and software support) and associated researchers. This Occasional Paper provides an update to the previously published benchmarks on completion rates (Bewick et al, 2006).

### Data source

Data were drawn from the updated version of the CORE National Research Database for Primary Care, collected between 1999 and 2008. The data was cleaned to remove clients with basic demographic details missing; aged less than 16 or over 65 years or with a therapy modality other than individual therapy. Clients with no assessment outcome indicated (n=4 368) were removed from the dataset, yielding a final sample of 60 242 clients, seen by 1 011 therapists in 35 services.

### The sample

The majority (70%) of clients were female and the mean age was 38.5 years (SD 12.01). 91% were White/Caucasian.

Mean assessment outcome rates were calculated for each service. The service-level mean data was then analysed to obtain values for the 25th, 50th and 75th percentiles. These in turn were used to create service-level benchmarks.

## Results

### Benchmarks overall

Benchmarks on assessment outcomes are presented for four primary assessment outcomes: Accepted for therapy; Referred to another service; Unsuitable for therapy; Assessment/one session only. Over all 35 services, 80% of clients assessed were accepted for therapy; 7% has an assessment/single session only; 5% were referred to another service and 3% were classed as unsuitable for therapy at the time. Table 1 shows the benchmarks by service for the sample as a whole and data for the four primary assessment outcomes is also represented graphically in Figures 1 to 4 below.

Table 1: Benchmarks for the whole sample

	Assessment outcome					
	Accepted into therapy	Accepted for trial period	Assessment/ one session only	Referred to another service	Unsuitable for therapy	Long consultation
N	48 403	3 067	4 066	2 760	1 687	159
Mean (SD)	81.0 (12.13)	5.5 (6.38)	5.7 (3.98)	4.7 (5.31)	2.8 (2.85)	0.3 (0.51)
Minimum	49.5	0	0.4	0	0	0
25th percentile	75.5	1.4	3.1	0.8	1.0	0
Median	81.1	3.8	5.2	2.9	2.2	0.1
75th percentile	90.6	7.2	6.8	6.0	3.7	0.5
Maximum	96.8	26.9	21.7	22.8	11.6	2.1

The average rate of acceptance into therapy among services is 81%, but this varies between 50% and 97% by service. It is interesting to note that three-quarters of services accept more than 75% of clients into therapy. 5% of clients were referred to another service, with the proportions referred by individual services ranging between 0% and 23%. 75% of services referred less than 6% of their clients to other services. An average of 5.7% of clients were seen for a single session only with levels varying between 0% and 22% and three-quarters of services seeing less than 7% of clients for a single session. Finally, 3% of clients were unsuitable for therapy, with a range between services of 0% to 12% and 75% of services judging less than 4% of clients to be unsuitable for therapy.

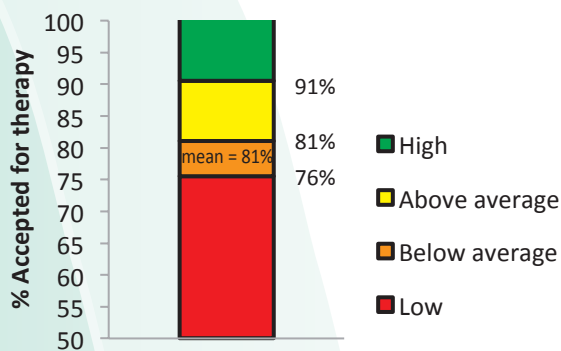


Figure 1: Benchmarks for proportions accepted for therapy

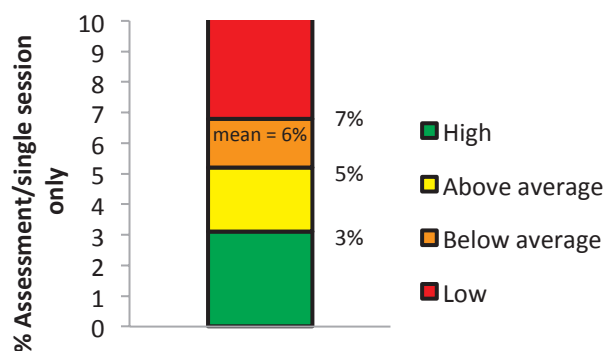


Figure 2: Benchmarks for proportions assessed/one session only

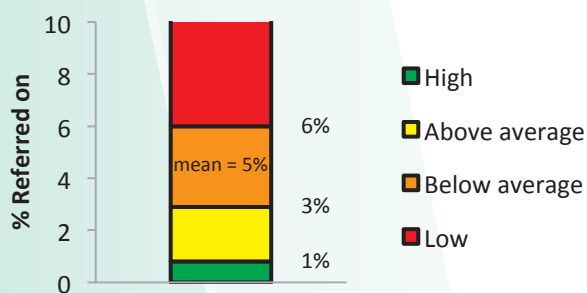


Figure 3: Benchmarks for proportions referred on

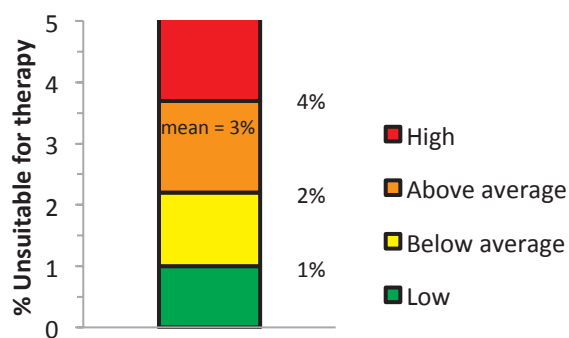


Figure 4: Benchmarks for proportions unsuitable for therapy

## Benchmarks by gender

Table 2: Benchmarks for males

	Assessment outcome					
	Accepted into therapy	Accepted for trial period	Assessment/ one session only	Referred to another service	Unsuitable for therapy	Long consultation
N	14 187	1 034	1 374	921	631	47
Mean (SD)	78 (13.17)	5.8 (7.22)	6.9 (5.01)	5.3 (6.08)	3.7 (3.68)	0.4 (0.59)
Minimum	42.5	0	1.1	0	0	0
25th percentile	73.8	0.8	3.4	0.8	1.1	0
Median	79.2	4.0	5.8	3.0	2.8	0
75th percentile	86.5	7.8	8.7	7.5	4.6	0.7
Maximum	98.1	30.8	23.2	24.8	14.5	2.8

Table 3: Benchmarks for females

	Assessment outcome					
	Accepted into therapy	Accepted for trial period	Assessment/ one session only	Referred to another service	Unsuitable for therapy	Long consultation
N	34 216	2 033	2 792	1 848	1 064	95
Mean (SD)	82.0 (11.8)	5.3 (5.98)	5.5 (4.08)	4.5 (5.05)	2.4 (2.51)	0.3 (0.47)
Minimum	52.0	0	0	0	0	0
25th percentile	76.2	1.5	2.6	0.7	0.7	0
Median	82.8	3.5	5.1	2.9	1.5	0
75th percentile	91.1	7.1	7.6	5.5	3.3	0.4
Maximum	97.6	25.9	21.2	21.8	10.1	1.8

Tables 2 and 3 above give detail on the benchmarks for assessment outcomes for male and female clients separately. There were significant differences in assessment outcome depending upon gender with a higher proportion of females (86%) than males (83%) being accepted for therapy ( $z=-8.47$ ;  $p<.0002$ ) and significantly lower proportions of females than males in each of the other 3 categories analysed.

## Benchmarks by ethnic origin

Table 4: Benchmarks for "white" clients

	Assessment outcome					
	Accepted into therapy	Accepted for trial period	Assessment/ one session only	Referred to another service	Unsuitable for therapy	Long consultation
N	44 303	2 809	3 790	2 421	1 286	117
Mean (SD)	81.2 (11.69)	5.5 (6.35)	5.7 (4.17)	4.8 (5.49)	2.6 (2.31)	0.3 (0.48)
Minimum	49.5	0	0	0	0	0
25th percentile	75.9	1.3	3.0	0.6	1.0	0
Median	82.0	3.9	4.9	2.7	2.0	0.1
75th percentile	90.6	7.2	7.5	6.4	3.6	0.5
Maximum	97.0	26.9	21.9	23.0	9.3	2.0

Table 5: Benchmarks for other ethnic groups

	Assessment outcome					
	Accepted into therapy	Accepted for trial period	Assessment/ one session only	Referred to another service	Unsuitable for therapy	Long consultation
N	2 452	230	212	138	103	13
Mean (SD)	78.1 (20.11)	8.4 (17.78)	6.3 (6.25)	3.7 (5.30)	2.9 (3.45)	0.6 (1.76)
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	0
25th percentile	70.3	0	1.6	0	0	0
Median	81.0	3.6	4.0	1.8	2.4	0
75th percentile	92.0	9.1	8.2	7.4	4.0	0
Maximum	100	100	25.0	20.6	12.8	9.1

33 services

In Tables 4 and 5, benchmarks are broken down into "white" and "non-white" clients, as indicated on the Therapy Assessment Form. It is important to note that the sample sizes for the non-white cohort are very low and thus the results should be interpreted with caution. The proportions of clients for each assessment outcome for the two ethnicity categories were broadly similar, with only the proportion being assessed as "unsuitable for therapy at this time" differing significantly: 3.5% of "non-white" clients and 2.5% of "white" clients ( $z=-3.54$ ,  $p<.0005$ ).

## Reference

Cahill, J., Potter, S. & Mullin, T. (2006). First contact session outcomes in primary care psychological therapy and counselling services. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 6 (1), 41-49.

