

Executive Summary

The Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC) service model is not entirely novel in the arena of mental health service provision. Nevertheless, in Australia where this service model has been implemented since 2003, its evidence base to date remains very limited. This Report presents the findings from an independent evaluation of the first PARC service provider in Western Australia, the Neami Joondalup Mental Health Step-Up Step-Down service. This service has been operational since 2013, and is run by Neami National, a national non-government specialist mental health service provider.

This evaluation is tasked with assessing several outcomes from the PARC service model, for patients as well as for the service provider and the health systems in general. These outcomes fall under three broad categories: (i) patients' self-reported measures for general psychological distress, general self-efficacy, and work and social adjustment; (ii) patients' satisfaction with service; (iii) linked administrative health record data on patients' deaths, hospital admissions, and presentations to hospital emergency departments; and (iv) economic effectiveness. The first two categories of outcomes were assessed using Neami's internal database, collected from patients who accessed the Neami Joondalup service between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2016. The latter two categories of outcomes were assessed using linked data obtained through DLB, which contained health related records pertaining to patients who accessed the Neami Joondalup service between 1 May 2013 and 31 December 2014. Outcomes of these patients were also compared to those of another similar, matched cohort of psychiatric patients (who did not receive Neami service), to optimize the findings' rigour.

Patients accessing Neami Joondalup service reported significant reductions in psychological distress, and significantly increased general self-efficacy as well as work and social adjustment, at service exit compared to service entry. Patients reported a high level of satisfaction with their stay at Neami overall, with at least 75% of the respondents to an Exit Questionnaire providing a rating of "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied". Results also showed that Neami Joondalup patients benefited from reduced hospitalization rate (or number) and risk, shorter hospital length of stay, as well as reduced risk of presenting to hospital emergency departments. Most importantly, death rate among Neami Joondalup patients was just over one-quarter of that among other similar/matched psychiatric patients who did not receive Neami Joondalup service. Economic analysis showed the PARC service model was of good value. On average, one year of PARC service saved approximately \$516,111 for the West Australian health system (primarily from the cost savings associated with the reduced number of hospital bed days), while saving approximately 0.28 potential years of life for each patient. Overall, the outcomes of the PARC service model as delivered by Neami Joondalup are highly affirming, from both perspectives of the patients and the service and/or system.

In addition to providing an independent evaluation of the PARC service model's outcomes, this report also identifies areas where Neami Joondalup, and Neami National, may be able to improve in its operations and service in future. Specifically, the ways in which it collects data and measures outcomes for its patients can be made more comprehensive and integrated to allow the capturing of the patients' recovery journeys more fully. Research/study design can also be improved for future evaluations, to allow for more conclusive evidence to be obtained and interpretations drawn, which in turn should inform more effective health funding and practice.