

Institute of Population and Public Health
Applied Public Health Chair
Impact Case Study



Dr. Louise Fournier: Improving the quality of Quebec's primary mental health care system



Research Focus

Generating new health research knowledge is a challenge. But it is an even greater challenge to translate that knowledge into evidence-based practices that have positive impacts on the health and well-being of individuals and populations.

A wealth of proven strategies have been developed worldwide on how to improve the quality of primary mental health care and services. Dr. Louise Fournier, Applied Public Health Chair, drew on these models to create, deliver, and test a knowledge translation (KT) program to help primary health care teams in Quebec improve the mental health of people with anxiety and depressive disorders.

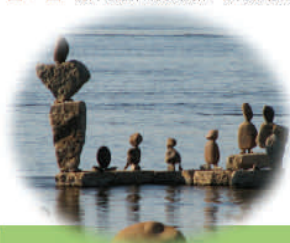
The Cible Qualité project has greatly contributed to the development of a sustainable quality culture at six Health and Social Service Centres (CSSSs) across the province. In the less than two years since its launch, it has resulted in concrete changes in the organization and delivery of mental-health care and services in these areas and helped to identify some of the contextual, organizational, and clinical factors that can impede or improve success.

Although the research portion of the project has ended, the committees in each CSSS test area are continuing their work. The Montréal Region of Quebec's Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) has decided to implement the program in its 11 CSSS service areas, as well. A strong indication of the significant value of this unique KT initiative is that efforts are currently underway to find funding for a team to offer the program throughout Quebec.

Research Impact: Making a Difference

Dr. Fournier and her project team based Cible Qualité on a conceptual framework called *Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services*, which maintains that three elements are key to successfully implementing health research: evidence, context, and facilitation.

In terms of evidence, the program used interventions that have a proven track record in the area of mental health. Context was taken into account by choosing six service areas that were highly diverse, both geo-



graphically and in terms of available resources. The research team adopted a multi-pronged approach to facilitation that involved external and local facilitators, a local working group, structural and financial support from the MSSS, and a variety of tools, including a care protocol, practice guides, a self-management manual, and standardized assessment and monitoring tools.

The project began with the transfer of knowledge to the CSSS committees through six three-hour teaching sessions, which took place over approximately five months. This was followed by a two-month period during which each of the committees developed a quality-improvement plan for its specific service area. The project ended in late 2010 after a one-year implementation, when the committees put their plans into place.

Although the last phase was only recently completed, the research team has already seen significant benefits. For example, various test areas have restructured the range of services available to people with anxiety or depression. These service areas have also demonstrated the adopted common tools for assessing and monitoring clients and of proven measures to support care self-management, completed training in various effective treatment methods, and fostered interdisciplinary teamwork.

As an offshoot of the project, the MSSS will be publishing guidelines for the treatment of anxiety and depression disorders in primary-care settings. Dr. Fournier and her team have also launched a new project to fill some of the gaps identified over the course of the Cible Qualité project. *Jalons* is aimed specifically at developing user-friendly care protocols, assessment and monitoring tools, and models for collaboration between general practitioners and primary mental-health care teams—all of which are uniquely adapted to the realities of the Quebec health-care system.

Want to Know More?

For more information, please visit the Cible Qualité project website (<http://www.qualaxia.org/ms/cible-qualite/index.php?lg=fr> pour la version française et <http://www.qualaxia.org/ms/cible-qualite/index.php?lg=en> pour la version anglaise) provides access to several presentations made by the research team, as well as links to a variety of relevant publications and sites—including evidence-based data on different care and service delivery models for common mental disorders, clinical practice guidelines, and self-care guides.

Dr. Louise Fournier is the CIHR/PHAC, FRSQ and the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services Applied Public Health Chair in Project Dialogue: Vers une approche populationnelle en santé mentale

Chair Contact Information
louise.fournier@inspq.qc.ca