

# Group Clozapine Medication Management at a Community Mental Health Center

K Schnitzer, M Ujkaj, O Freudenreich

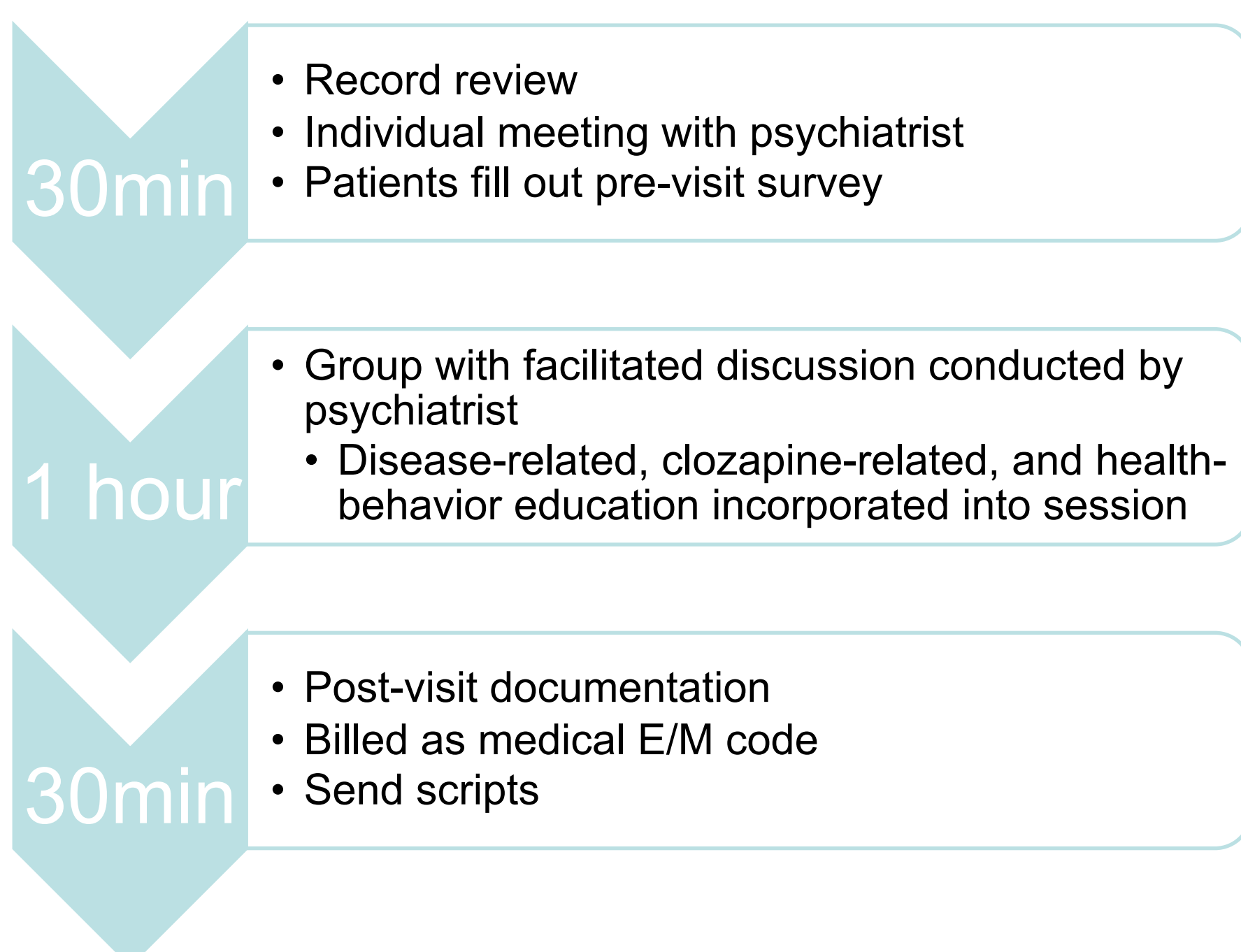
Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital  
North Suffolk Mental Health Association and Erich Lindemann Mental Health Center, Freedom Trail Clinic



## Background

- The group model of medication management has been long-utilized for diabetes management.
- Group medical visits have been linked to improved blood sugar control, increased self-efficacy, increased satisfaction with care, lower hospitalization rates, and decreased emergency department utilization.
- Rationale for group treatment programs:
  - A unique process occurs when people come together in a group - individuals may be more suggestible and feel psychologically more powerful
  - Groups provide a unique opportunity to reduce shame and isolation associated with chronic conditions
- We sought to pilot a group clozapine model of care for young males within a community mental health center.

## Group structure



2 hours for 7-9 patients

## Participants

- 9 males participated, attending bi-weekly (n=7) or monthly (n=2) at their preference
- Mean age = 33 (range 24-42)

## Group topics

Group discussion topics are both generated organically and suggested by the facilitator, and have included:

- Health-related goals
- Referential thinking
- Paranoia
- Trust
- Fear
- Auditory hallucinations
- Recovery from substance use
- Effects of substance use on mood and symptoms
- Side effects of clozapine
- Coping with stressors
- CBT approaches to distorted thoughts
- Behavioral activation
- Strength exploration & positive psychology

## Results

- After 3mo (6 groups), members on average rated their satisfaction with group at 8.5/10
- Improvements were seen on survey measures of:
  - Member-rated Overall health (68 to 78/100, n=6)
  - Scales of Psychological Well-Being:<sup>5</sup>
    - Personal growth subscale
    - Autonomy support subscale
  - Mental health recovery<sup>6</sup>
- No psychiatric hospitalizations or decompensations
- Full clozapine adherence reported
- No missed appointments

## Feedback from group members

*"The group helps me stick to my goals better because of the accountability."*

*"Everyone seems very open and kind. Having a full hour session has been great."*

*"I like that there's good guys who have similar experiences."*

*"I learned that a lot of other people have the same issues and experiences that I have. Makes me feel better."*

*"I learned about smoking down the meds."*

*"Now, I'm trying to try new things, engage with life again a little more."*

*"There are people who seem to be having more success than me but that's okay. It's good to know I'm not the only one trying this med."*

## Conclusions

- The clozapine group:
  - has been well-received by patients
  - appears to be a feasible, safe, and scalable model for delivery of care
- Further efforts to improve on and expand the group may include:
  - involvement of a co-facilitator
  - streamlined symptom check-in
  - structured curriculum
  - other group types (ie different age group, gender)

## Bibliography

1. Sadur, Craig N., et al. "Diabetes management in a health maintenance organization. Efficacy of care management using cluster visits." *Diabetes care* 22.12 (1999): 2011-2017.
2. Trento, M., et al. "A 5-year randomized controlled study of learning, problem solving ability, and quality of life modifications in people with type 2 diabetes managed by group care." *Diabetes care* 27.3 (2004): 670-675.
3. Blumenfeld, A., & Tischio, M. "Center of excellence for headache care: group model at Kaiser Permanente." *Headache: The Journal of Head and Face Pain* 43.5 (2003): 431-440.
4. Jaber, R., Braksmajer, A., & Trilling, J. Group visits for chronic illness care: models, benefits and challenges. *Family practice management* 13.1 (2006): 37.
5. Ryff C. "Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being." *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 57.6 (1989):1069-1081.
6. Young, S., & Bullock, W.A. "The Mental Health Recovery Measure. Can We Measure Recovery? A Compendium of Recovery-related Instruments." (2003).