

Building On Knowledge : An Evidence Informed Approach For Decision Making On Restructuring Youth Specialized Psychiatric Services



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INTRODUCTION

In his 2012 performance report on mental health services, Quebec's Commissioner of Health and Well Being had put at the forefront the need to have a provincial strategy in health promotion and mental health disorders prevention for young people under the age of 25 years. Moreover, the preliminary version of the next provincial Mental Health Action Plan focus on developing services for youth.

For the Douglas University Mental Health Institute, one of Quebec's three Mental Health Institute's, insuring better accessibility and continuity of services for adolescents and young adults, ages at which most mental disorders begin, has become a high priority over the last years. Acknowledging that youth mental health needs are not adequately addressed within the actual structure designed for children or adults, the Douglas Institute gives to the Health Technology Assessment Unit the mandate to inform decision-making processes regarding the development of specialized mental health services that would target both adolescents and young adults, with an emphasis on early intervention and on transition into adulthood support.

This is in line with the current trend on model of care and service delivery for youth and with the Prevention and Early Intervention Program for Psychosis (PEPP-Montréal) implanted at the Douglas Institute, which aim to increase early identification and treatment of emergent mental health disorders in youth in order to improve clinical course and minimize consequences on life trajectories.

A Health Technology Assessment

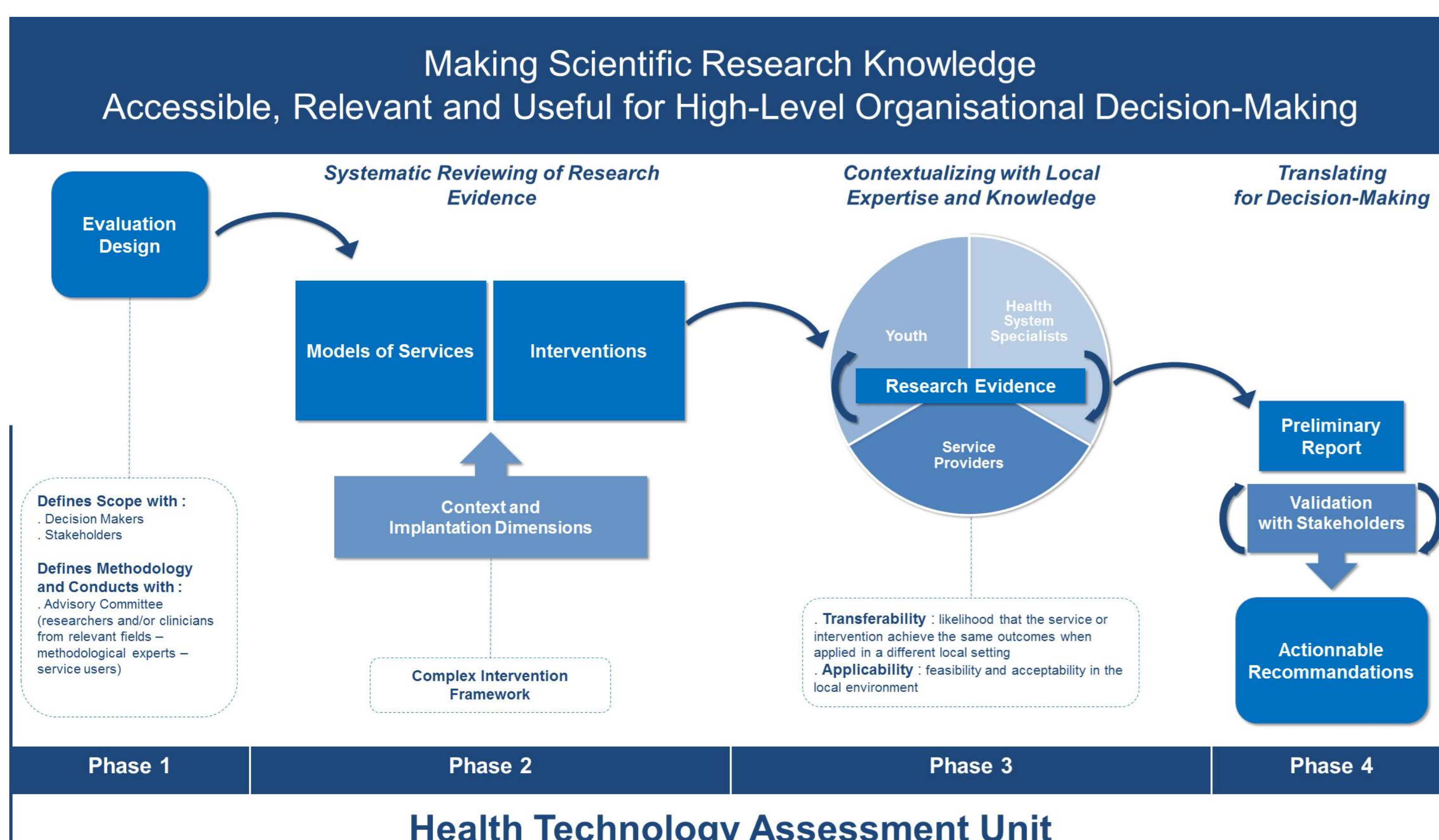
This assessment is ongoing and follows the approach proposed by Quebec's *Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux* (INESSS) to guide health technology assessment. As requested by Douglas Institute decision makers, it focuses on youth aged between 14 and 30 who have or are at risk of developing bipolar disorders.

Aim

To describe the process designed to produce evidence-informed and context-specific recommendations in order to support organizational decision-making.

A DECISION-ORIENTED PERSPECTIVE

A Four-Phase Process



Two Linked Systematic Reviews

First review : What are the existing mental health models of services aimed at providing specialized clinical services to both adolescents and young adults? How their services are organized and delivered? What is the evidence that these models are effective in realizing the expected effects? This review will incorporate research on youth's perspective and involvement in services planning and development.

Second review : What is known on the efficacy and effectiveness of bipolar disorders interventions (other than pharmacological) for i) adolescents and young adults, ii) emerging mood disorders and, iii) for supporting transition to adulthood ?

These reviews will be conducted in light of a complex intervention framework. Those interventions (*defined broadly*) are inherently characterized by their several interacting components, the complexity of the chain linking intervention to outcomes, their sensitivity to features of the local context and implementation conditions and processes. The use of this framework will also facilitate the contextualization of findings.

Contextualization of Review's Findings

To examine transferability and applicability to Quebec mental health services system and to local area, findings will be analyzed and interpreted with the lens of a range of i) specialists in the field of youth mental health services, ii) services providers, at the clinical or management levels, from different organizations and, iii) youth service users with bipolar disorders.

Towards actionable recommendations

To better support decision-making, one main strategy will consist to present preliminary recommendations derived from informed and contextualized evidence to a wider audience of key stakeholders, including relevant youth or patients organizations.

DISCUSSION

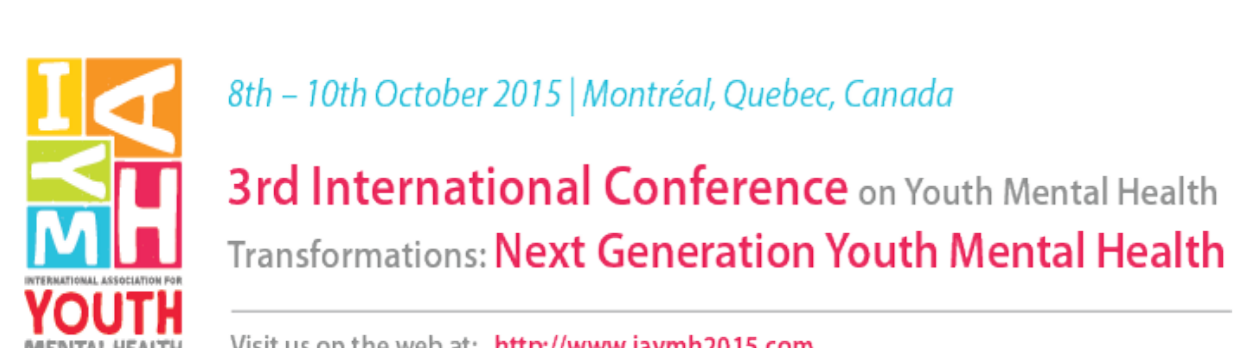
The first review is on-going. As far as we know, there is no other systematic review focusing on specialized mental health services targeting both adolescents and young adults with mood disorders. Given the actual development of youth mental health services, it will be a timely contribution to the field.

One challenge in conducting this review is age-related. The population of interest is differently named (e.g. emergent adult, young people, youth) and the terms used refers often to different age boundaries. Searching through bibliographic databases and identifying relevant papers have been a harder and longer process than expected and have led to a revision of the review strategy.

Producing evidence-informed and context-specific recommendations to support organizational decision-making is a sizeable challenge. It implies to stay in line with decision makers and with changes that occur continuously in health and social system services.

Health Technology Assessment is a field of evaluation that aims to support health services decision-making by providing evidence on efficacy, safety and cost-effectiveness of health technology and intervention. It also seeks to inform decision-making by assessing economical, psychological, social, legal or ethical implications regarding adoption, implementation or discontinuation of the use of a given technology or intervention. As a means to increase the use of research evidence in decisions made by health and social care services, this type of evaluation has been largely promoted by Quebec's health authorities at different levels of the system, and in hospitals and public social services that have a university mandate.

Presented at:



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The views expressed here are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of Douglas UMHI or of the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal.

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