

National Comorbidity Initiative

**A review of data collections relating to people with
coexisting substance use and mental health
disorders**

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is Australia's national health and welfare statistics and information agency. The Institute's mission is *better health and wellbeing for Australians through better health and welfare statistics and information.*

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Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ALSWH	Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health
AODTS-NMDS	Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set
ARIA	Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia
ASCDC	Australian Standard Classification of Drugs of Concern
ASCL	Australian Standard Classification of Languages
ASCO	Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographic Classification
ASSADS	Australian Schools Students Alcohol and other Drug Survey
BEACH	Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health survey of general practice activity
CAI	Computer-assisted interview
CATI	Computer-assisted telephone interview
CIDI	Composite International Diagnostic Interview
COAG IDDI	Council of Australian Governments Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative
COTSA	Clients of Treatment Services Agencies
CSHA-CAP	Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement Crisis Accommodation Program
CSHA-CH	Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement Community Housing
CSHA-HPA	Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement Home Purchase Assistance
CSHA-NMDS	Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement National Minimum Data Set
CSHA-PRA	Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement Private Rental Assistance
CSS	Crime and Safety Survey
CSTDA-NMDS	Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement National Minimum Data Set
DASR	Drug and Alcohol Services Report – annual data collected from Australian Government funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander substance use specific services
DEST	Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training
DEWR	Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DoHA	Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
DSM-IV	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Version IV
DUCO	Drug Use Careers of Offenders
DVA	Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs
DUMA	Drug Use Monitoring in Australia

FaCS	Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GCS	General Customer Survey
GP	General practitioner
GSS	General Social Survey
HACC MDS	Home and Community Care Minimum Data Set
HILDA	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia
HoNOS	Health of the Nation Outcome Scales
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
ICD-10-AM	International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision, Australian Modification
ICPC-2	International Classification of Primary Care, Version 2
ICPC-2 PLUS	International Classification of Primary Care, Version 2 Plus
ID	Identification
IDRS-IDU	Illicit Drugs Reporting System - Injecting Drug Users
IDRS-PDI	Illicit Drugs Reporting System - Party Drug Initiative
JJ NMDS	Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set
KHLS	Kids Help Line Statistics
KI	Key informant
LDS	Longitudinal Data Set
LGA	Local government area
MBS	Medicare Benefits Scheme
MHNOCC	Mental Health National Outcomes and Casemix Collection
NAC	National Alcohol Campaign tracking research
NACCHO	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
NAPEDCD	National Non-admitted Patient Emergency Department Care Database
NATSIHS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NCMHCD	National Community Mental Health Care Database
NCIS	National Coroners Information System
NCPDC	National Child Protection Data Collection
NCSD	National Community Services Data Dictionary
NDSHS	National Drug Strategy Household Survey
NHDD	<i>National Health Data Dictionary</i>
NHMD	National Hospital Morbidity Database
NHS	National Health Survey
NMD	National Mortality Database
NMDS	National Minimum Data Set
NOPSAD	National Opioid Pharmacotherapy Statistics Annual Data collection
NPC	National Prisoner Census
NPCS	National Police Custody Survey

NRMHCD	National Residential Mental Health Care Database
NSMHW (adult)	National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (adults)
NSMHW (C & A)	National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (children and adolescents)
NSMHW (psychotic)	National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (low prevalence (psychotic) disorders)
NSP	National Needle and Syringe Program Survey
NSW-IHS	New South Wales Inmate Health Survey
NTCS	National Tobacco Campaign Survey
OATSIH	Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
OC NMDS	Outpatient Care National Minimum Data Set
PAPI	Pen and Paper Interviewing
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
PDU	Party drug users
QLD-WPHS	Queensland Women Prisoners' Health Survey
RADAR	Register of Australian Drug and Alcohol Research
RRMA	Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas classification
SAAP NDC	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection
SACC	Standard Australian Classification of Countries
SAND	Supplementary Analysis of Nominal Data
SAR	Service Activity Reporting – annual data collection from Australian Government funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care services
SDAC	Survey(s) of Disability, Ageing and Carers
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SF	Short form
SLA	Statistical Local Area
SLK	Statistical linkage key
SOMIH	State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing
Veterans' data	Survey of Entitled Veterans, War Widows and their Carers
WHO	World Health Organization

Summary

This project identifies, reviews and reports on the current state of data collections relating to people with coexisting substance use and mental health disorders ('comorbidity') in Australia.

Background

(see Chapter 1)

The Australian Government, under the National Illicit Drug Strategy, allocated \$9.7 million over five years to a National Comorbidity Initiative to improve service coordination and treatment outcomes for people with coexisting mental health and substance use disorders. One priority under this Initiative is to improve data systems and collection methods within the mental health and alcohol and other drug sectors to manage comorbidity more effectively. The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) commissioned the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to undertake this project to inform this priority area.

Process

(see Chapters 2–6)

At the outset of the project, a project advisory group (comprising representatives from the AIHW, DoHA and the Australian Institute of Criminology) was established to provide expert advice to the project team throughout the duration of this work.

The first stage of the project focused on current literature within the field, previous work commissioned under the National Comorbidity Initiative, as well as the National Mental Health Plan (2003–2008) and the National Drug Strategy (2004–2009) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what stakeholders want and need to know about people with comorbidity in Australia. From this, a list of key questions relating to comorbidity was identified.

During the second stage of the project, 56 data collections in the areas of mental health, alcohol and other drugs, general health and/or welfare, housing, income support, criminal justice and child protection, and education and training were explored, in the first instance to determine whether they were of relevance to the issue of comorbidity, and therefore this project. Of these, 38 data collections ('key data sources') were identified as being relevant and able to inform the understanding of comorbidity in Australia. A comparative analysis was then undertaken of the key data sources, comparing them in terms of their methodology, scope, coverage, timing, collection counts and data items. The key data collections were then related back to the key questions about comorbidity, to determine the extent to which the data collections could currently answer them.

Exploring the comparability of key data collections and attempting to answer the key questions about comorbidity revealed a number of gaps and areas for improvements in existing data collections. Options for improving the usefulness and availability of information about people with comorbidity in Australia are then discussed.

The current state of play

(see Chapter 5)

The key data sources provide information which would enable analysts to address, to varying extents, the majority of the key questions relating to comorbidity. For example, with appropriate methodology, the key data sources provide information to describe comorbidity in the Australian population (in various demographic subgroups and settings) and the many types of services accessed by this group. However, current data sources are not able to fully address questions about service delivery models and outcomes for people with comorbidity.

The extent to which the data sources are capable of addressing these questions depends partly on their comparability in terms of factors such as methodology, definitions and classifications. Before attempting to use the data sources to address research questions, analysts would need to consider these and a number of other issues, including sample size and data quality.

Future possibilities

(see Chapter 6)

Australia is currently in the relatively privileged position of having a rich set of data sources relating to the issue of comorbidity. While in most cases the reviewed data sources provide information that contributes towards an understanding of comorbidity, these collections were not designed to specifically address all questions about comorbidity. It may be possible in the future, and in cooperation with the stakeholders responsible for these data sources, to improve the usefulness of existing data. A number of suggestions for such improvements, together with options for future analysis, are highlighted.