

INPLASY

Knowledge from 15 years of research using the Staff Attitudes to Coercion Scale (SACS) – a scoping review on staff attitudes towards the use of coercion in mental health care

INPLASY202390007

doi: 10.37766/inplasy2023.9.0007

Received: 04 September 2023

Published: 04 September 2023

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**Support** - FOSTREN.**Review Stage at time of this submission** - Formal screening of search results.**Conflicts of interest** - None declared.**INPLASY registration number:** INPLASY202390007**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 04 September 2023 and was last updated on 04 September 2023.**INTRODUCTION**

Review question / Objective Attitudes of mental health professionals have increasingly been discussed as highly relevant when it comes to the use of coercion in mental health care and have been examined in several studies, not only using different forms of assessment but also relying on different definitions of attitudes. In 2019, Laukkanen and colleagues published a review on attitudes towards containment measures, identifying 24 studies which based their research on the three-component view of attitudes, i.e. attitudes consisting of an emotional, cognitive and behavioural components (Laukkanen et al., 2019). On the other hand, Doedens and colleagues conducted a review on the influence of attitudes and staff characteristics on the use of coercion and included studies defining attitudes as a pattern of beliefs, judgments and feelings,

revealing a higher number of relevant studies (Doedens et al., 2019). Despite the underlying definition of attitudes, existing research does not yet provide clear results on some relevant research questions, including if and how those attitudes influence the actual use of coercive measures.

One important instrument to measure those attitudes is the Staff Attitude to Coercion Scale, which has been developed 15 years ago by Husum and colleagues (Husum et al., 2008). As current reviews could show, several studies have used the SACS until then and it has been translated and adapted into various languages and contexts (Husum et al., 2022; Husum et al., 2023). Since the initial development several aspects have evolved, that address the need to update the original version of the SACS. The aim of this scoping review is to structurally identify which aspects should be considered in such an update and what challenges can be identified in this regard from

studies on staff attitudes, including those not using the SACS.

As such, the underlying research question will be as following: “What do we know from research about staff attitudes towards coercion in mental health care since the SACS has been developed? Which challenges can be identified from previous studies? Which implications do they rise in regard to updating the SACS?”

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Condition being studied Professionals in adult mental health care.

METHODS

Search strategy The search shall be conducted in three steps and will be based on a variation and combination of the following search terms: staff attitudes, coercion, mental health. First, we will conduct an initial search of one medical (PubMed) and one psychological (PubPsych) database. The results will be analysed regarding text words contained in the title and abstract as well as index terms of the retrieved papers. Those shall be used to complement the already set search terms. In a second step, we will use the final search terms to use all databases selected as relevant for the research question. This includes databases regarding psychological and medical research including Medline®, PsychInfo, Cinahl, Pubmed and PubPsych. as well as public research databases including Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar. Grey literature shall be included searching OpenGrey. As a third step, we will examine the reference lists of all identified sources.

Participant or population Mental health professionals (staff).

Intervention Not applicable.

Comparator Not applicable.

Study designs to be included Empirical studies, qualitative and quantitative.

Eligibility criteria We will include qualitative and quantitative, empirical studies which address attitudes of mental health professionals in relation to the use of coercive measures, independent from the respective study design or research question. Theoretical or conceptual papers as well as

reviews will also be excluded. Quantitative studies may use validated instruments or self-developed questionnaires for assessments of staff attitudes. In the latter case, as well as in case of qualitative studies, they should provide information on the definition or concept of attitudes on which the study was based. As the research team consist of researchers from different European countries, no limit exclusion criteria on language will be set. Studies published after 2008 will excluded from the studies, as in this year the original version of the SACS has been published.

Information sources This includes databases regarding psychological and medical research including Medline®, PsychInfo, Cinahl, Pubmed and PubPsych. as well as public research databases including Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar. Grey literature shall be included searching OpenGrey. As a third step, we will examine the reference lists of all identified sources.

Main outcome(s) The following data should be extracted from the identified sources within a deductive content analysis: author(s), year of publication, origin (country), aims, population, methods/study design, definition/concept of attitudes, description of attitude assessment, limitations.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis The selection of sources will be conducted in two steps –examination of title and abstract, followed by examination of full-text. The selection will be performed based on the criteria defined in this protocol. The screening will be conducted in pairs of two reviewers, who will conduct the screening independently. Any disagreements will be solved by consensus or by the decision of a third reviewer. The process of study selection will be depicted using a flowchart as described in the PRISMA-ScR statement. The organization of sources and screening will be conducted using Covidence.

Strategy of data synthesis On a quantitative basis, it will be summarised how many and how often different concepts and assessments of attitudes have been used in the identified studies. For this, the provided concepts shall be coded into respective categories. The same will be conducted for the limitations identified by and for the included studies. This shall be complemented by a narrative synthesis and conceptual analysis of identified concepts of attitudes and their relationship with the use of coercive measures. Furthermore, implications shall be drawn for upcoming research in this regard.

Subgroup analysis Not applicable.

Sensitivity analysis Not applicable.

Country(ies) involved Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Poland, Spain.

Keywords attitudes; coercion; staff; scoping review; SACS.

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