Preferences for access to therapy service for people with disability in Rural Australia: a discrete choice experiment

Dr Gisselle Gallego

on behalf of the Wobbly Hub & Double Spokes Team

Rebecca Chedid, Angela Dew, Kim Bulkeley Michelle Lincoln, Craig Veitch, Anita Bundy, & Jennie Brentnall
Outline

› Section 1: Setting the scene
  - What is the problem?
  - What was our goal?
› Section 2: What we did (Methods)
› Section 3: Implications for policy/practice
Challenges to receiving therapy services in rural NSW

- Uneven distribution of the therapists (physiotherapists, occupational therapist, speech pathologists and psychologists) in rural areas.

- Geographic distance / travel.

- Dispersed client population.

- Recruitment and retention issues.

- Demand for therapy outstripping supply of therapists.
What was our goal?

Aim:

› To determine the relative importance that carers of people with a disability living, in rural Australia, place on different therapy service delivery characteristics and the trade-offs they are willing to make between them.

Setting (Western NSW)
How did we do it?- Survey

- Primary carers aged 18 years or older of people with disability living in the Western Region of NSW
- Design based on what carers told us
- Stakeholders input
- Pilot tested
- 83 questions divided in 8 sections
- Online & paper copies
- Several distribution channels
- Three month recruitment period
Recruitment strategies

Are you a carer for a person with a disability?

The “Wobbly Hub & Double Spokes” survey explores carers’ views about current access to therapy services for people with a disability living in western NSW.

Use this link to complete the survey:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/WHCarerSurvey

You may enter a draw for the chance to win a gift voucher.

Please contact Dr Angela Dew, Project Manager, on (02) 9351 0050 for more information or for a printed copy of the survey.

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Wobbly Hub & Double Spokes Project
Family Health Services, NSW Health and ADHC Western Region
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Sydney

Professor Craig Veltch
Chair in Community Based Health Care

The Wobbly Hub and Double Spokes survey project is a 4-year NHMRC funded partnership between Family and Community Services, Aging, Disability and Home Care (ADHC), Western Region and the Faculty of Health Sciences, the University of Sydney. The aim of the project is to develop, implement and evaluate evidence-based policies which will promote timely and effective therapy service delivery to people with a disability living in rural and remote communities in Western NSW.

The “Wobbly Hub & Double Spokes” research team invites you to complete the “Western NSW Carer Survey”.

The aim of the survey is to explore carers’ views about current access to therapy services for people with a disability living in western NSW. In addition to describing current therapy access, the survey asks carers to identify preferences for access to therapy services. An understanding of current and preferred access to therapy will assist in recommending models of therapy access to best meet the needs of people with a disability and their primary carers.

We would like to encourage you to take the time to complete the survey. You may enter a draw for the chance to win a gift voucher.

You may complete the survey online, you may leave the survey and resume it later on the same browser/computer. Cookies must be enabled on your browser and the [Next] button on the main page must be clicked in order to save your previous answers. Please feel free to forward the survey link to other caregivers.

If you would prefer a hard copy of the survey, please contact Dr Angela Dew on (02) 9351 0050 or angela.dew@sydney.edu.au. We are also able to assist you with completing the survey over the telephone – please email or call Angela to arrange a time to do this.

Information in the survey is confidential and only aggregate data will be recorded. Completing the survey is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the University of Sydney, or ADHC. Once you have completed and submitted the online survey, you cannot then withdraw this submission.
Discrete Choice Experiment (DCE)
Making choices

1
Proximity to family and friends

OR

2
Job opportunities

Therapy services (Factors or attributes)

Factors/attributes

• Travel: time taken to travel to receive therapy
• Service provider: sector providing the services
• Out of pocket costs
• Therapy deliver by
• Waiting time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute name</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Glossary definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>• Overnight stay or longer</td>
<td>Time taken to travel to receive one therapy session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More than 4 hours return – Day trip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Up to 4 hours return – Day trip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service provider</td>
<td>• Private provider</td>
<td>Sector providing the services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Not for profit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of pocket costs</td>
<td>• More than $50 per session</td>
<td>What you pay for per therapy session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Up to $50 per session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No cost per session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapy delivery</td>
<td>• Other staff (deliver therapy prescribed by therapist)</td>
<td>Who is delivering the therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Therapist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting time</td>
<td>• More than 6 months</td>
<td>To receive therapy services after being referred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 4 to 6 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 0 to 3 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Well established statistical methods - **DCE Experimental design** 2 alternatives (A & B), 5 attributes with 3 levels and 2 blocks of seven choice sets
**DCE Example**

Now we are going to ask you to look at SEVEN pairs of therapy service descriptions. For each pair select the service option you would prefer, considering the balance of all factors in the set.

58 Which therapy service would you prefer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Service A</th>
<th>Service B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel</strong></td>
<td>Up to 4 hrs</td>
<td>Overnight stay or longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To receive one therapy session</td>
<td>- Day trip (return) -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Provider</strong></td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Not-for-profit (NGO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector providing services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out of Pocket Costs</strong></td>
<td>Up to $50</td>
<td>More than $50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What you pay per therapy session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Therapy Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Other staff</td>
<td>Therapist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who delivers therapy</td>
<td>- delivers therapy prescribed by therapist -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waiting Time</strong></td>
<td>More than 6 mths</td>
<td>0-3 mths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To receive therapy services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preferred therapy service: [ ] Service A  [ ] Service B  [ ] Neither of these two therapy services
Results – Who do they care for? (N=133)

Number of responses:
- 166 Carers completed the survey
- 152 Attempted to complete the DCE task
- 135 Carers completed all 7 choice sets
- Final sample 133 with demographics

Who do they care for?

Gender:
- Male: 59%

Relationship:
- Child: 84.3%

Age:
- Mean age: 17 years
Results – Where do they live (N=133)
Results - Who are the carers?

Gender
- Female: 96%
- Male: 4%

Marital status
- Married or de facto: 82%
- Widowed: 5%
- Single: 5%
- Divorced or separated: 8%

Age
- Mean age: 46 years

Time living in rural NSW
- Mean time living in rural NSW: 30 years
### Attributes of the ideal therapy service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short waiting time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided by a therapist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel up to 4 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Least</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 hours of travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carers prefer to have short waiting times for therapy services, no out of pockets costs and therapy delivered by a therapist. The sector providing the service (Government, NGO or private) was not significant even though higher preference for Government.
Implications

- Therapy services delivered by therapy assistants or implementers will require careful introduction to achieve uptake and acceptability.

- Under the NDIS, DCEs are a potential approach to assessing carers’ preferences – what is most important to them?

- Assist with future planning and design of therapy services so to meet the needs of people in rural and remote areas.
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Wobbly Hub & Double Spokes Project  
Jointly funded by NHMRC and ADHC Western Region Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney  
Website: [http://sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/research/wobbly-hub](http://sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/research/wobbly-hub)  
Follow us on twitter: [http://twitter.com/WobblyHub](http://twitter.com/WobblyHub)
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