

Research Objectives

The ultimate objective of the PRN is to expand the clinical science base and bring about improvements in psychiatric care to benefit psychiatric patients. Because the PRN includes a large number of psychiatrists practicing across the full range of treatment settings, this research infrastructure can be used to study an extensive range of issues. The APIRE Board of Directors has appointed two committees, the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee, for scientific oversight and technical assistance of the PRN. These committees consist of professionals in numerous fields from around the country who give expert advice concerning clinical issues for investigation and development of the research agenda. The list below highlights examples of the range of topics that reflect and build upon many of the areas of research that are already being addressed by the PRN.

The principal research aims of the PRN include:

- Gathering data on specific clinical issues and decisions facing psychiatrists in order to address gaps in the current research base.
- Systematically assessing the effectiveness of different treatments and combinations of treatments for specific patient groups. This includes patients who are commonly excluded from clinical trials (e.g., children, the elderly, and people with comorbid conditions).
- Examining the outcomes of care for specific psychiatric disorders.
- Conducting health policy and health economic studies of the impact of changes in the organization, delivery, and financing of care on access, quality, and outcomes of psychiatric treatment.

*** Indicates research areas where there already exists PRN data that is relevant to the study topic.**

Access to Care

- Barriers to access to care*
- Characteristics of individuals with mental disorders who receive treatment from psychiatrists*
- Factors affecting access to psychiatric treatments*

Patterns and Quality of Treatment

- Types and combinations of treatment provided for the treatment of specific mental disorders and comorbid conditions*
- Rates of conformance with “best practices” as measured by treatment consistent with evidence-based practice guideline treatment recommendations*
- The clinical decision-making process and patient, clinician, setting and health plan characteristics that affect patterns and quality of care*
- Effect of comorbidities on patterns and outcomes of care*
- Split versus integrated psychotherapy and psychopharmacologic treatment and associated patterns, quality and outcomes of care*
- Patient adherence/compliance with psychopharmacologic and psychosocial treatments*
- Medical errors

Research Objectives**Outcomes of Care**

- Effectiveness and outcomes of different types and combinations of treatment for specific mental disorders
- Adverse effects of different psychopharmacologic medications

Systems of Care and Economic Issues

- Cost effectiveness of treatments
- Variations in access, patterns, quality and outcomes of care for specific mental disorders across different systems of care and health plan dimensions*
- Trends in/effects of different financing, reimbursement, utilization management, and contracting mechanisms to manage care and control costs*
- Effects of financial/resource considerations on the provision of treatments*
- Effects of health insurance coverage/benefits and changes in health policy on treatment provision*

Special Populations

- These studies examine the various areas of research outlined here with particular attention to specific sociodemographic groups and target populations, such as children and adolescents, elderly, specific racial and ethnic groups, homeless, uninsured/under-insured, corrections, and juvenile justice populations*

Methodological Studies

- Psychometric validation studies to validate diagnostic, clinical and treatment-reported data
- Psychometric validation studies to validate measures of managed and non-managed systems of care
- Developing and testing methods to collect longitudinal data from PRN members and patients*

Other Topics

- Trends in psychiatric practice*
- Diffusion of new medical technologies*
- Interface of psychiatry with primary care*