

**50 SHADES OF THERAPY:**

The impact of psychosexual medicine 1974-2024  
Considering race, gender, disability, pornography

Hilton Tower Bridge, London  
22-23 March 2024



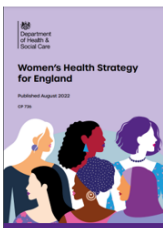
**Introduction of a Psychosexual Therapy Service into a Primary Care Network (PCN) Women's Health Hub**

**Suzanne Jones**  
BSc Hons, Dip IPM, RM, RGN

**Introduction**

The two principal objectives for undertaking this service development are:

- Long waiting time for patients to be seen in the NHS for psychosexual therapy.
- Personal development in continuation of training with the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine (IPM) to Membership qualification.



The Women's Health Strategy (08/2022) states that improving access to services and providing care that is wrapped around the needs of the individual, including their mental and sexual health and wellbeing, is part of the Governments' long-term plan.

Referral to see a Psychosexual Therapist where I work in Northwest England, has, over many years, been to the Specialist Sexual & Reproductive Health Service. Referrals were accepted from GPs and doctors and nurses working in Sexual Health Services. I moved from this service where I was employed as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Sexual & Reproductive Health to work for a PCN Women's Health Hub delivering Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC).

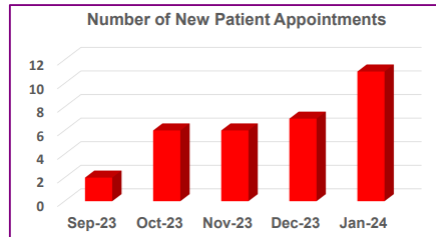
I was also working towards Diploma level qualification with the IPM, which I gained in 2022. The IPM states, 'those in further training (i.e. having passed Diploma) may consider receiving referrals within their own local work setting.' As there was no provision of psychosexual services within the PCN I was keen to explore the possibility of introducing one.

**Method**

- The request made to my employer, to continue with IPM seminar training, was agreed. I was supported to attend 3 hours per month, and I agreed to self-fund the fees.
- I was enabled to provide one clinic per month of 3 hours duration. My manager informed GP practices within the PCN that they were able to refer their patients to the Service.
- Criteria for referral is any female presenting with sexual difficulty that the GP and the patient consider would benefit from therapy. Initially referrals were booked into a slot on Emis IT by the GP, but we have since changed the process.
- The referrer now completes a referral form and sends it to admin support, I review it and phone the patient to arrange an appointment for face-to-face consultation.
- After the appointment I send a letter to the GP. We have increased appointment availability to three appointments per week due to demand. The service is currently being audited.
- Average wait time = 7 weeks

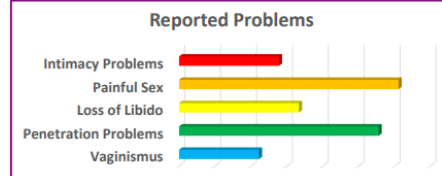
**Results and Analysis**

The following data is from 27/9/23 – 31/01/24. Women's Health Hub Report, CLPCN Activity psychosexual therapy service.



**Referrals – Reported Problems**

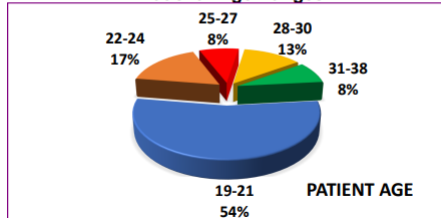
Several patients reported a combination of problems.



**Referrals - Sources**

| General Practice GP | GP Nurse Practitioner | Mental Health Practitioner |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 80%                 | 16%                   | 4%                         |

**Patient - Age Ranges**



**Waiting Times**

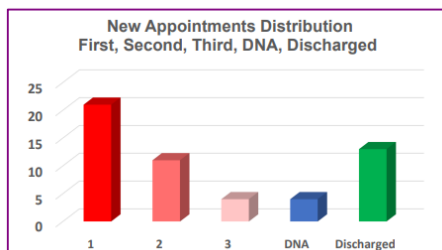
|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| CLPCN (new service) | 7 weeks     |
| Existing services   | 16-20 weeks |

**Appointments**

| Available Appointments | Appointments Booked | Appointments Cancelled |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 42                     | 42                  | 8                      |
| Did Not Attend         | Returning Patients  | New Appointments       |
| 4                      | 5                   | 25                     |

**New Appointments**

| New Patients                            | Attended First session | Attended Second session | Attended Third session | Did Not Attend |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 25                                      | 21                     | 11                      | 4                      | 4              |
| Patients Subsequently discharged        |                        |                         |                        | 13             |
| Mean Number of Appointments per Patient |                        |                         |                        | 2.2            |



**Discussion**

There is demand from patients to access psychosexual therapy services in the CLPCN Women's Health Hub.

Patients are given a choice of attending either the Women's Health Hub, or the Specialist Sexual Health Service. Support and/or advice from the Lead for Psychosexual Therapy in the Specialist Service is available if required.

Patients receive an appointment for consultation within 6 - 7 weeks which is a considerably shorter wait-time than the current wait to attend the Psychosexual Therapy Service in the local Specialist Service which is 16-20 weeks.

Support and supervision are required via IPM seminar training.

**Conclusions / implications or recommendations**

Introduction and delivery of a psychosexual therapy service within a PCN Women's Health Hub is achievable, with support from the PCN Board and Management

Support for training including time to attend seminars and fees, as well as freeing-up of the clinician from other duties (e.g. LARC clinic) must be considered and achievable.

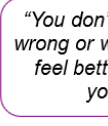
Consideration should be given regarding future commissioning of Psychosexual Therapy Services as part of a PCN Women's Health Hub. An audit or survey of patient satisfaction will be undertaken in the near future.

**Verbal Feedback from patients:**



"I think it has been necessary for me. Before I spoke to you, I have never spoken about it, and I have found a clarity. I felt so low, but I feel I have made progress."

(Patient A after third appointment)



"You don't know if something is wrong or was it just in my head. I feel better that I came to see you, Thank You."

(Patient B after first appointment)

**Reference**

1) Women's Health Strategy for England. Department of Health & Social Care. Policy Paper. Updated version, August 2022.

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6308e552e90e0729e63d39cb/Womens-Health-Strategy-England-web-accessible.pdf>

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