

associated with ‘hard outcomes’, such as the risk of compulsory readmission to hospital.

In a recent King’s Fund report, Collins sets out the challenges of conceptualising mental health outcomes, writing that many physical health traumas have a clear path to recovery and a reasonably clear shared sense of priorities. ‘In the care of people with mental health conditions, and perhaps people with other chronic conditions, there is a much broader range of sometimes contested objectives.’⁵

We need to ensure that these different perspectives are accommodated within the process of evaluating productivity and efficiency. Inevitably this means that our optimising problem becomes multidimensional in nature. It is therefore quite possible that allocating resources in particular ways may improve outcomes in one domain while degrading those in other areas. However, there may also be situations characterised by ‘pareto-dominance’, whereby outcomes can be improved in one area without a negative impact elsewhere.

The way forward

To assess whether the limited funds available are being put to best use, we need a clear framework with which to define and measure productivity and efficiency in the context of mental health services. Moreover, increasingly, workforce availability, as much as monetary resources, are constraining how care can be delivered. There are also important issues related to the optimum (most efficient) stage within the evolution of a mental disorder at which to intervene. Indeed, ‘an ounce of prevention is often better than a pound of cure’, although identifying such ‘sensitive’ or ‘critical periods’ to target for early intervention is not straightforward. We also need an agreed basket of meaningful outcome measures with which to evaluate the effectiveness of care. If the mental health productivity puzzle is to be solved, we need to begin by identifying each piece clearly and put them together, one by one.

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Declaration of interest

None.

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psychiatry in literature

‘Of the change from one sex to another’: eye-witness accounts of Pliny the Elder (23–79) and Ambroise Paré (1510–1590)

Greg Wilkinson 

Pliny, unprecedented encyclopaedist, writes:

‘It is no lie nor fable, that females may turn to be males. For we have found it recorded in the yeerly Chronicles called Annales, that in the yeere when *Pub. Licinius Crassus*, and *C. Cassius Longinus* were Consuls of Rome, there was in Cassinum a maid child, under the very hand & tuition of her parents, without suspicion of being a changeling, became a boy: and by an ordinance of the Southsaiers called *Aruspices*, was confined to a certaine desert Island, and thither conveighed. *Licinius Mutianus* reporteth, That himselfe saw at Argos one named *Arescon*, who beforetime had to name *Arescusa*, and a married wife: but afterwards in processe of time, came to have a beard, and the generall parts testifying a man, and therupon wedded a wife. After the same sort he saw (as he saith) at Smyrna, a boy changed into a girle. I my selfe am an eie-witnesse, That in Affricke one *L. Cobieius*, a citizen of Tisdrita, turned from a woman to bee a man, upon the very marriage day: and lived at the time that I wrote this booke’ (*Naturalis Historia*, trans. P. Holland, 1601).

Paré, renowned surgeon, cites Pliny, and adds:

‘Also being in the retinue of the King at Vitry-le-François in Champagne, I saw a certain person (a shepherd) Germain Garnier – some called him Germain Marie because when he had been a girl he had been called Marie – a young man of average size, stocky, and well put together, wearing a red, rather thick beard, who, until he was 15 years of age had been held to be a girl, given the fact that no mark of masculinity was visible in him, and furthermore that along with the girls he even dressed as a woman. Now having attained the aforesaid age, as he was in the fields and was rather robustly chasing his swine, which were going into a wheat field, [and] finding a ditch, he wanted to cross over it, and having leaped, at that very moment the genitalia and the male rod came to be developed in him, having ruptured the ligaments by which previously they had been held enclosed and locked in (which did not happen to him without pain), and, weeping, he returned from the spot to his mother’s house, saying that his guts had fallen out of his belly; and his mother was very astonished at this spectacle. And having brought together Physicians and Surgeons, in order to get an opinion on this, they found that she was a man, and no longer a girl; and presently, after having reported to the Bishop – who was the now defunct Cardinal of Lenoncourt – and by his authority, an assembly having been called, the shepherd received a man’s name: and instead of Marie (for so he was previously named), he was called Germain, and men’s clothing was given to him; and I believe that he and his mother are still living’ (*Des monstres et prodiges*, trans. A. Pallister, 1983).

Luigi de Crecchio is credited with the identification in 1865 of congenital adrenal hyperplasia.

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