

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Fit for Duty

Ms Leanne Humphreys from the School of Psychology, along with other UWS researchers, has been developing an audiovisual clinical skills assessment tool (CSAT) to evaluate the competence of psychology student-interns in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). This research was funded by the NSW Psychologists Registration Board.

'Professional psychologists have emphasised the effectiveness of CBT treatment interventions and yet little research has been done on demonstrating the effectiveness of the training and supervision of professional interns', says Ms Humphreys. 'The current assessment of core clinical competencies at Masters of Psychology level within many university clinical training units has to-date been largely subjective, relying on the assessment of a senior clinician. There is increasing demand for university-trained psychology practitioners to be skilled in CBT given the demonstrated effectiveness of CBT in treating a number of mental health problems such as depression, generalised anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder. We wish to use a more objective and consistent evaluation process to determine the acquired skill level of psychology interns delivering CBT.'

Forty psychology interns enrolled in Masters Degrees in Clinical and Forensic Psychology on extended placement at the UWS Psychology clinic will be assessed in their implementation of 15 broad cognitive behavioural therapeutic techniques. A range of studies will be carried out in order to determine the validity and reliability of the assessment tool.



The development of a valid, reliable assessment tool will pave the way for future research examining models of therapist skills acquisition and refinement. It will also allow a more consistent grading of Masters of Psychology students and clarify the core clinical skills they have attained. This will help to improve employer and community confidence in the high professional standard of UWS Masters of Psychology graduates.

Project Title: The Clinical Skills Assessment Tool (CSAT): Determination of psychometric properties.
Funding has been set at: \$35,117
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