



## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2025

### POSTER PRESENTATION 26:

Assessing Demand for A Psychology Service in Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

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#### Introduction:

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) has a bidirectional relationship with psychological health. Best practise national and local guidelines recommend a psychologist work with multidisciplinary teams to treat IBD. Despite these guidelines many IBD services do not have a psychologist within their team, including the IBD service in Royal Glamorgan Hospital.

#### Aim:

This service development project had two aims:

1. Establish if there was a clinical need for a psychologist within the IBD service.
2. Understand why service users would like a psychology service and what support they want to receive.

#### Methodology:

A mixed method quantitative and qualitative design was adopted. 138 participants were recruited, 123 data sets were used in analysis. Questionnaires were given to establish psychological need (impact of IBD to daily life and the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21). Descriptive statistics were generated to summarise the quantitative data set. Participants were invited to focus groups to gain insights into what psychological support they wanted and why. Focus group transcriptions were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (RTA).

#### Results:

DASS-21 scores demonstrated participants' average distress levels were within the severe range (mean: 26). Most participants were within moderate to severe classifications of distress (76%). Most participants answered yes to experiencing difficulties associated with IBD: impacting hobbies (86%). Most participants (86%) would want access to a psychology service if available. From the RTA 6 themes emerged: 'we need support on a difficult journey', IBD is a lonely disease, wanting an accessible service, facilitating peer support, working with a psychologist, and needing to be understood.

#### Conclusion:

The results demonstrate people using the IBD service are experiencing severe difficulties with their mental health. RTA analysis provides guidance as to why psychology is important and how a service could be designed to meet these needs. Given the prevalence of psychological distress within the IBD population studied alongside clinical guidelines, the gastroenterology service should submit a business proposal for a psychologist post.