

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

M.Sc.

M.Sc. Psychiatric Research: Written Examination

COURSE CODE : **PSYR0001**

DATE : **07–JUN–04**

TIME : **14.30**

TIME ALLOWED : **3 Hours**

MSc in Psychiatric Research Examination

2004

Each of the 3 sections below (A, B and C) carries an equal number of marks. Please answer all 3 sections.

Section A – Short Notes

You should answer ALL the questions in this section. Spend no more than 10 minutes writing short notes on each.

1. Describe **two advantages** and **two disadvantages** of focus groups as a tool for exploring perceptions of mental illness among members of the public.
2. List and define **two forms of reliability** and **two forms of validity**. Outline how they could be tested for a short measure of symptom severity in mania, designed to be rated by an experienced clinician following an interview with a patient.
3. Data have been collected regarding duration of untreated psychosis (the period during which people have psychotic symptoms and have not yet received any potentially effective medication) and subsequent severity of negative symptoms in a cohort of people with early schizophrenia. The measure of severity of negative symptoms used is usually regarded as yielding interval level data. Both duration of untreated psychosis and severity of negative symptoms show an approximately normal distribution in this sample.
 - a. You wish to test the hypothesis that duration of untreated psychosis is related to severity of negative symptoms. What statistical test could you use?
 - b. The finding from your test is that duration of untreated psychosis and negative symptom severity are related at the $p=0.001$ level of significance. Does this indicate a causal relationship between them? Briefly explain your answer.
 - c. You wish to investigate whether abnormality of premorbid personality (measured as a binary variable) and age of onset of psychotic symptoms could be confounding variables whose influence may account for the apparent relationship between duration of untreated psychosis and severity of negative symptoms. What statistical test could you use to test this possibility?

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- d. You wish to test the further hypothesis that duration of untreated psychosis is longer for men than for women. What statistical test could you use?
4. Describe **three potential advantages** to involving service users in designing and carrying out psychiatric research and **three potential impediments** to doing this effectively.
5. An initial randomised controlled trial of an innovative mental health service intervention involving intensive case management for has obtained positive outcomes. However, subsequent attempts to repeat the trial in various centres have not reproduced these positive findings. List four factors which could explain this discrepancy.

Section B Protocol planning – quantitative methods

Answer one question only within this section. Include aims, the hypothesis or hypotheses you are testing, methods, an outline analysis plan and a brief summary of the main advantages and disadvantages of your protocol. You do not need to include costings in your protocol, but you may assume that your study budget, though not limitless, is reasonably large (up to around £500,000 if required). Include an outline of your aims

1. A pilot study has suggested that a psychological intervention which involves a series of sessions dedicated to relapse prevention may reduce hospital admission rates in people with bipolar affective disorder. You wish to investigate whether this intervention should be introduced in clinical practice throughout the NHS. Outline a protocol which would allow you to do this.
2. You wish to investigate whether the elevated risk of developing diabetes mellitus thought to be associated with taking olanzapine persists after treatment with this atypical antipsychotic is discontinued. Outline a protocol which would allow you to do this.
3. It has been suggested that people whose births involved significant obstetric complications are at greater risk of developing schizophrenia than others. Outline a proposal which would allow you to test this.

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Section C Protocol planning – qualitative methods

Answer one question only within this section. Include aims, study questions, a description of how you would approach analysis, and a summary of the main advantages and limitations of your protocol. You do not need to include detailed costsings, but you can assume that your study budget, though not limitless, is reasonably large (up to £300,000 if necessary).

1. A new government initiative is aiming to reduce rates of street drug use among young people under 16 years. A need is identified for better understanding of the triggers to drug use in this age group and the social contexts in which it occurs. Outline a protocol which would allow you to contribute to the evidence in this area.
2. Older urban populations in the UK include increasing numbers of people from South Asian backgrounds. Outline a protocol which would allow you to explore whether there are differences in the support needed from mental health and social care services between families of South Asian people with dementia and families of White British people with dementia.
3. As part of an investigation into parenting among people with severe mental illness, you wish to investigate the views of children of parents with schizophrenia about the impact their parents' illness has had on them. Outline a protocol which would allow you to investigate this.

END OF PAPER