The Project

Michigan State University’s Wraparound Evaluation Project (WEP) evaluates the ongoing Wraparound mental health initiative in Michigan through partnerships with the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Michigan Department of Human Services. Wraparound is an approach to mental health service delivery that is focused on individualizing care and coordinating the efforts of the family, friends, and service providers of children with serious emotional disturbances.

Data Collection Challenges

Collection of data for this project presented several challenges:
- The data collectors are distributed across the state and have limited interactions with the centralized project management team.
- Data reporters needed to be notified when the next longitudinal data collection was due.
- For different data reporters, the versions of instruments varied.
- The Biomedical Research & Informatics Core (BRIC) administers and provides support for the Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap™) application, an secure online data management tool, but the software did not have the capability to fully address the study needs.

Methods

BRIC designed a REDCap™ plugin that allowed the project to administer multiple versions of their longitudinal survey via e-mail to different subject types (i.e., parent, teacher, etc.). These data were either entered locally into REDCap™ by the sites or hardcopies of the data are sent to the WEP office for entry. Survey e-mails were customized to each subject and generated on a study specified schedule along with reminders for subjects who failed to complete the survey. In addition, BRIC created reports that allow each site to view on demand summaries of their site specific data.

Conclusion/Future Direction

Investment in customization of existing software tools allowed WEP to significantly reduce the amount of project management time needed for this large study. Future analyses can be conducted to determine whether e-mail reminders improved the completeness of survey data collections in this project.

Results

The e-mailed reminder system was launched in 2013. Data is currently collected from 39 sites across Michigan, with over 1700 subjects enrolled for regular follow-up. Over 275 study members log in to the system for data entry.