Consumer-Clinician Relationships in Mental Health: A Study Based on Lived Experience
Nicole Varca, Victoria Hendel, Christian Rosa Baez, Susan Landy, Linda Larson, Nathan Schwirian, Irving Wu, Melissa Alford, Jonathan Delman, Matcheri Keshavan, Larry Seidman, Raquelle Mesholam-Gately

BACKGROUND:
- The therapeutic alliance between a clinician and a mental health consumer is associated with better symptomatic and functional outcomes.¹
- There are few instruments developed in collaboration with researchers and people with lived mental health experience to assess consumer-clinician relationships and quality of life.

METHODS:
- This study examined the quality of the therapeutic alliance and the quality of life expressed by mental health consumers (N=76) between the ages of 20-76.
- Interviews were conducted and questionnaires were developed by a research team comprised of consumers with lived experience about the consumer-clinician relationship (Treatment Relationship Inventory; TRI) and subjective quality of life (a modified version of the World Health Organization Quality of Life Assessment; mWHO-QOL²).
- Correlational analyses compared total scores of the TRI and mWHO-QOL as well as the subsections within each of these instruments.

RESULTS:
- Demographics: See Table 1.
- Treatment Background Characteristics: See Table 2.
- Total average scores for the TRI and the mWHO-QOL were significantly and positively correlated (r =.402, p<.001). See Figure 1.
- Questionnaire Averages: See Table 3.
- Subsections within the TRI (clinician relationship, emotional climate, interpersonal continuity, mutual trust) and the total average score for the mWHO-QOL were also significantly correlated (range of r =.360 to .395; all p<.01). See Figure 2.
- Subsections within the mWHO-QOL (physical, cognitive, emotional) and the total average score for the TRI were similarly significantly correlated (range of r =.237 to .350; all p<.05). See Figure 2.
- Specific subsections between the instruments also showed significant correlations (range of r =.252 to .378; all p<.05). See Figure 2.

DISCUSSION:
- Findings suggest a strong therapeutic alliance and high quality of life have a close relationship.
- Certain aspects of the therapeutic alliance and quality of life have a stronger association than others.
- Further research efforts will help elucidate characteristics of the therapeutic alliance that improve treatment and quality of life for mental health consumers.

REFERENCES: