

Key Features of Aire ouverte, Quebec's Provincial Integrated Youth Services Initiative: A Delphi Study

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Summary

- **75% of mental health disorders emerge before age 24, only half of affected individuals receive help (1).** This Delphi study evaluates Aire ouverte (AO), Quebec's first integrated youth service designed to address young people's mental health needs.
- Drawing on the perspectives of **youth, caregivers, professionals, and decision-makers**, the study identifies the core components of Aire ouverte to inform service improvement and strengthen system integration

Introduction

Integrated Youth Services (IYS) provide a one stop shop that brings together mental health care and social support.

Aire ouverte, implemented across 33 sites in Quebec, aims to:

- **Reach vulnerable youth and those least likely to seek help**
- **Reduce wait times for access to care**

This study uses the **Delphi method** to identify the **components, values, needs, and perceived impacts of Aire ouverte** as reported by diverse stakeholders (youth, families, clinicians, and researchers). Findings will contribute to the implementation of **a learning health system**, grounded in continuous data collection and quality improvement.

Methodology

Participants (N = 72)

(25 sites included), **young people (n = 18)**, families (n = 7), clinicians, managers, researchers (n = 22), and decision-makers (n = 25)

Procedure

The Delphi method uses several rounds of surveys until a consensus is reached on the key issues.

14 **quantitative** questions (1-7) (components)
11 **open-ended questions** (values, principles, impacts, needs)

Demographic data

Analyses

Quantitative data: descriptive analyses, consensus threshold = SIQR < 0.5. Qualitative data: thematic coding

Research Questions

1. What are the essential **components, values, principles, impacts, and needs** of Aire ouverte services?
2. To what extent do the various stakeholders (youth, families, clinicians, managers, researchers, and other experts) **agree on the importance of these aspects? What is the perspective of young people on these aspects?**

Results

PARTICIPANTS

N = 72 participants

- Youth (n=18), Family (n=7)
- Managers (n=25)
- Researchers, and others (n=22)

Mean age : 37,2 years

17 % of visible minorities

Gender repartition

- 65 % women, 30 % men, 5 % other gender identities

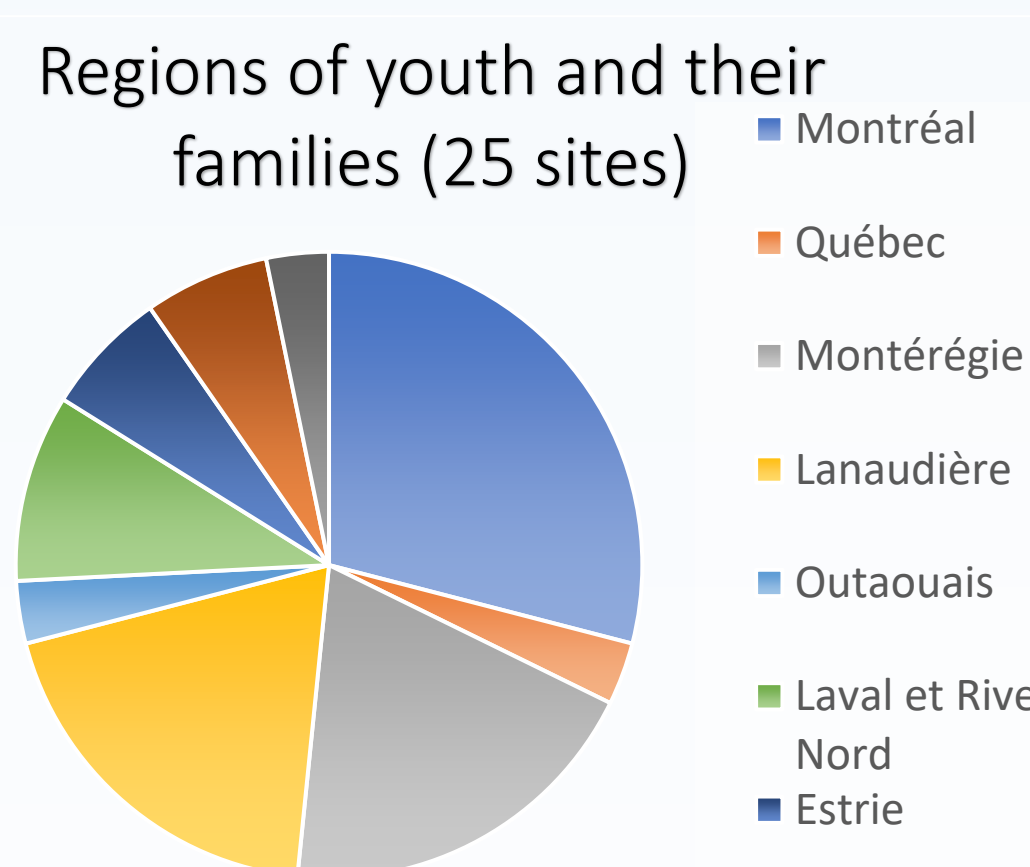


Figure 1: Regions in Quebec of youth and their families

Synthesis of quantitative results

14 statements evaluated on a scale from 1 ("not at all important") to 7 ("very important")

✓ The highest-rated items (average > 6) and those with consensus:

- Full participation in their care *
- Spaces adapted for young people
- Flexible, holistic, and tailored services
- Targeting specific youth populations
- Improving access to services
- Promoting partnerships

✗ Mixed opinions on::

- Peer support and family involvement

Young people gave peer support a higher rating than other groups.

Summary of qualitative results (Youth only)

Recurring themes according to thematic analysis:

🎯 **Personalized and comprehensive care (mental, physical, and sexual health)**

📚 **Academic and professional support**

🏠 **Support for the transition to adulthood (independence, housing)**

💡 **Competence and compassion.**

🔑 **Quick, non-judgmental, and culturally appropriate access**

Impact indicators for young people:

- **Autonomy**
- **Satisfaction with holistic support**
- **Preparation for adulthood**

- « Pour et avec les jeunes: les services doivent être conçu et mis en œuvre avec la participation active des jeunes »
- « Les services Aire ouverte devraient valoriser l'accessibilité des jeunes à ses services, devraient promouvoir la santé physique, psychologique, sexuelle et globale des jeunes »

Figure 2: Responses to open-ended questions about the services Aire Ouverte should offer. Responses from two anonymous participants..

Discussion

- A consensus was reached among participants on several key elements of Aire ouverte, including **active participation in young people's care**.
- Peer support and family involvement remain controversial.
- Beyond mental health, young people express needs related to **physical health, educational and vocational support, and the transition to adulthood. They value a flexible, non-judgmental, and culturally appropriate approach.**
- The findings can inform the planning and evaluation of Open Area services.

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