School of Medicine

Mental Health Problems in Orange County, California

Sabindra Rai

Divya S. Subramaniam, PhD, MPH

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1. Abstract

2-1-1 Orange County (211OC) is a local, private, and non-profit organization connected to Orange County, California residents for over twenty-eight years by providing critical social services such as housing, food, education, utilities, and mental health. Mental health problems in Orange County have increased in severity over the past decade, and also suicide rate spiked to a one hundred years high during the COVID-19 pandemic. 2-1-1, Orange County's twenty-four-seven hotline for those struggling with mental health, has seen a profound increase in calls related to mental health during this past year, most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This paper details the results of an internship with Plan4Co and their stakeholder (211OC) that aimed to forecast the total number of calls related to mental health and to design and develop a high-quality dashboard for the call center using Microsoft BI and Snowflake. An LSTM recurrent neural network was used as a model to create the forecasts and both exploratory and statistical analysis was done during this capstone project. The results show that the number of mental health calls undulate during each week and that the number of forecasted calls for the next thirty days will be increasing by just over one percent (1.38%).

2. Introduction

2.1 Company/Project Overview

Plan4Co is a relatively new data science startup with less than seventy-five contractors. Plan4Co specializes in fulfilling small businesses' data science needs for a competitive price while offering a polished product and a "can-do attitude." It offers comprehensive capabilities and specialized industry knowledge that is important to solving an organization's complex problems. It gives innovative predictive analytics that helps in delivering cost-effective insights through integrated cloud based dashboards and reports.

Orange County is the sixth largest County in California. According to the 2018 indicators report, 8% of the California population lives in Orange County. It has a robust and diverse economy, with a number of household incomes in the upper quartile which have influenced the level of education and thus lowering the rate of crime (Condo et al). However, Orange County's high cost of living is a rising problem that may be strongly correlated to the rise in the quantity of mental health concerns. A mental health survey in Orange County put the interest of adolescents, veterans, and the homeless ("Orange County MHSA Program Analysis"). The findings show that the variance of mental health differs amongst the different demographic groups within the County. The major cause of mental health, according to a survey, was psychological distress ("OC COMMUNITY INDICATORS 2020-2021"). The main intention of the Mental Health Services Act, which was voted for in November of 2004, was to improve mental health services for those individuals that are at the greatest risk. This proposition was also intended to create policies that relied on local agencies to implement new programs. The goal of the capstone project was to make a live forecasting dashboard related to the quantity of mental health calls made to 2-1-1 OC and to help them to make more informed and intelligent decisions.

2.2 Internship experience and learning objectives

From the 24th of May of 2021 to the 15th of August of 2021, the author completed a capstone internship experience with the Data Science and Analytics department of Plan4Co and their stakeholder (2-1-1 Orange County) under the supervision of Mark Charipar (Project Manager and Data Scientist). The internship accounted for two hundred and forty hours, with sixteen hours per week varying depending on other work responsibilities. During the course of the internship, the author enhanced not only his technical skills but also was involved in business activities and solving real world problems.

For this capstone internship experience, the author was required to complete training courses on Microsoft Power BI, Snowflake's SQL database cloud, and the platform SaturnCloud before starting this project. All of this training took one month to complete. After the completion of the training courses, the author began the real world project sponsored by 2-1-1 Orange County. The author interacted with the preceptor on a weekly basis while with the other members of the organization on a daily basis. The author researched the mental health crisis in Orange County which was due to health care services being difficult to access for certain demographics and the lack of overall culture awareness on the effects of social distancing policies on individuals' mental health, as well as the general downturn in the economy. Hours dedicated for completing this project were spent on training courses, conducting literature reviews and gathering background information, uploading the data into a Snowflake, data cleanup and preprocessing, analyzing the data using Microsoft Access and statistical modeling, building a forecasting model using a recurrent neural network LSTM algorithm, designing and developing a live forecasting dashboard, collaborating with Plan4Co team members and 2-1-1 OC employees, and preparing periodic reports and the final capstone internship paper.

2.3 Literature Review

According to the Older Adult Mental Health Resource Guide, older adults have a diverse set of ethnicities and cultures (Dupee). Orange County has inadequate services and programs for adults with mental health. The services provided by the county required community awareness for improving the pre-existing public services and by better meeting the needs of the older adults within the community. The guide provides accessibility, evaluation, counseling, diagnosing, and early prevention has directories which when followed, will ensure older adult mental health concerns are treated effectively.

Orange County, like many other counties, lacks the resource allocations to adequately address the mental health needs of its constituents ("COMMUNITY INDICATORS 2018"). A World Health Organization report from 2016 stated that about 15% of the older adult population suffers from mental issues. From the research, it was evident that adults more advanced in age are more susceptible to concerns relating to mental health. Also, in the Orange County Adult Services Program, depression was indicated as a common diagnosis (Dupee 44).

The current state of mental health is covered within the Orange County MHSA program analysis. It also estimates the prevalence of mental illness and the use of mental services that are homeless. The findings are that the percentage of mental illness prevalence in Orange County

among the unsheltered individuals was high (Orange County MHSA Program Analysis). The Mental Health Resource Guide provides the relevant directories to find the required information on a mental issue.

3. Data

3.1 Source of the data

The source for the "Call Reports Dataset" is URL (2-1-1oc). The 2-1-1 Orange County provided the yearly datasets from 2014 to 2021, which contains information about the callers who received assistance from the 2-1-1 support helpline for their concerns, needs, and services. The caller data was contained in excel spreadsheets, which each contained three sheets, NeedsMetAndUnmet, CallReports, and Referrals. Each spreadsheet corresponded to a years worth of caller data and the column names for the CallReports sheets varied from year to year. The customer 2-1-1 OC forwarded the excel spreadsheets directly, because the CRM database they use (iCarol) only allowed them to access their caller data in excel sheet format monthly by request. The details of the datasets are as follows:

Details of the Call Reports Datasets:

Datasets	Number of variables in each sheet			Number of Observations in each sheet		
(Call Reports)	Needs Met and Unmet	Call Reports	Referrals	Needs Met and Unmet	Call Reports	Referrals
Dataset_2014	35	158	20	200404	70759	167015
Dataset 2015	35	158	20	161627	68104	148222
Dataset_2016	35	158	20	164772	69620	153727
Dataset_2017	35	158	20	185584	68344	164587
Dataset_2018	35	158	20	169411	66352	145058
Dataset_2019	35	158	20	169411	66352	145058
Dataset_2020	35	158	20	219181	111927	207138
Dataset_2021	35	158	20	116120	62377	107615

Details of the columns in the Call Reports Datasets: The details of the columns for NeedsMetAndUnmet, CallReports, and Referrals sheets have been shown in Appendix I (See Appendix I).

3.2 Transforming and Data Cleaning with SQL

One of the initial tasks that every data science project requires is preparing, cleaning, and transforming the data for analysis. It is no surprise that approximately 80% of the time spent in this data science project was to extract the insights in the data and to prepare it for analysis. The majority of the data cleansing was done using SQL queries via the cloud platform Snowflake. The author transformed eight years worth of Excel call reports datasets into a Snowflake data cloud warehouse using SQL queries as a standard view. SQL queries were used in the Snowflake tables to select columns, merge, extract, find, remove duplicate rows, add a NumberOfCalls column, and many additional steps to clean the data (i.e., recategorizing outlier data into a predefined 'other'

category). This data engineering was extremely necessary in order to analyze the data and to create a model that would produce meaningful output that 2-1-1 OC could use practically.

The author first created the SOL queries that merged the eight datasets into a single dataset and provided the number of unique and NULL values for each column. The majority of the unusable columns that contained an unacceptable level of NULL values were removed from the dataset. After merging the tables using SQL, there were many duplicate rows that had to be removed. This same eventual output likely could have been produced using a more complex SQL query. The project was done while adhering to agile methodologies, so regular updates and progress reports needed to be made to the customer. Several of the columns had the same caller information. The author extracted only those columns that were relevant for the analysis, which is as follows: Date of Call, Taxonomy Code beginning with "R" – this is because the taxonomy codes that begin with 'R' correspond to "Mental Health." The other usable and relevant columns were Gender and Current or Prior Military Experience. The author then transformed the data by using the "Date of Call" column as the index and regrouped the data so that each row contained only one unique date. After cleaning up the data, its size was drastically reduced, now only containing 32,978 rows and 7 columns. The author found that in order to fit the data correctly, selecting only the aforementioned columns was the best possible decision given the customer's request of forecasting the number of mental health calls. Finally, the author exacted an SQL query that shared the cleaned dataset with other Plan4Co team member's Snowflake accounts under the guidance of the preceptor. Figure 1 represents the detailed information of the dataset within the Snowflake database, and figure 2 represents some of the data prior to reindexing the data by "Date Of Call" in the Snowflake Cloud Platform.

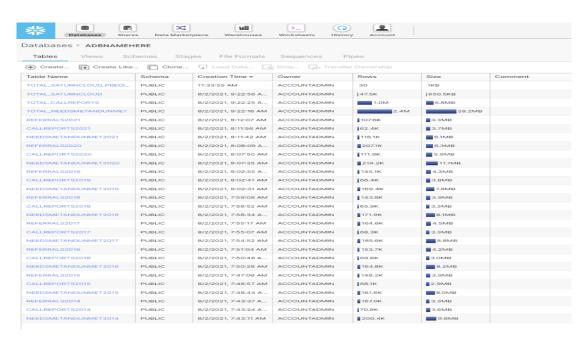


Figure 1: 211OC Dataset's information in Snowflake database

Row	DateOfCall	NumberOfCalls	TaxonomyCode	TaxonomyName	DemographicsGenderPerson_in_Ne	DemographicsPrior_or_Current_U_S
1	2020-12-31	1	RX-8450.7000	Residential Substance Use Disorder	Man	No
2	2020-12-31	3	RF-8380	Talklines/Warmlines	Woman	No
3	2020-12-31	1	RP-5000.1500	Clinical Psychiatric Evaluation	Man	No
4	2020-12-31	1	RX-8500.8000	Sober Living Homes	Woman	No
5	2020-12-31	1	RP-5000.1500	Clinical Psychiatric Evaluation	Woman	No
6	2020-12-30	1	RP-1500.1400-150	Child Abuse Hotlines	Woman	No
7	2020-12-30	1	RP-5000.1500	Clinical Psychiatric Evaluation	Woman	No
	2000 10 00		DE 0000	to the lateral flavors of the	111	No.

Figure 2: Data visualize in Snowflake Cloud Platform

3.3 Exploratory Data Analysis

Once the data had been cleaned thoroughly, the author conducted some exploratory data analysis in Microsoft Excel and Jupyter Lab to see how the data was distributed and correlated.

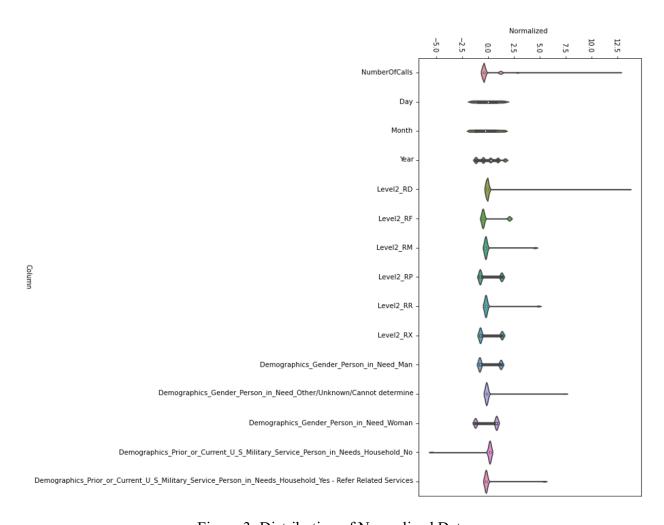


Figure 3: Distribution of Normalized Data

Looking at Appendix II, we can say that the number of mental health calls spiked in 2021 and during October 2014. On the other hand, the number of mental health calls seemed to have the

lowest figures from April of 2020 to February of 2021. There were two hundred and two distinct Taxonomy codes, with the highest number of calls being for individual counseling followed by Talklines/Warmlines (See Appendix III). All the level 2 codes started with "R" (calls relating to mental health) seem to have a drastic drop at the end of the "number of calls by date" charts because they were produced by taking the sum of each month and the current month's data had just begun (See Appendix IV). The Plan4Co team found that a very small number of calls referred to the related services. This was because most of these calls were just for counseling. However, the data shows that the largest number of calls were received from females, whereas the largest number of male callers were for related services (See Appendix V & VI). More than 90% of calls were received from individuals who speak English compared to the other languages spoken, such as Spanish, Vietnamese, etc. The largest number of mental health calls with current or prior military history were from males, although more than half of the overall mental health callers are female. (See Appendix VII). This makes sense, as more than 80% of males served in the U.S. military compared to females.

4. Analysis

4.1 Preprocessing

After conducting the exploratory analysis, the author created a python script that connects the data from Snowflake to a Jupyter Lab server in SaturnCloud. After a discussion with the preceptor and analyzing the statistics of the cleaned data, the author decided to do additional preprocessing for a more in depth analysis. In the preprocessing steps, we first renamed some of the variables into the readable format like "Demographics_Gender_Person_in_Need_" to the "Gender" and so on. We dropped the Taxonomy name because the Taxonomy code and the Taxonomy name give the same information. The Taxonomy codes were filtered by their level two codes to reduce the number of unique mental health codes down from two hundred and two. As is usual for machine learning models, the categorical variables had to be transformed using numerical encoding. We transformed the "Militants" categorical variable into a numerical value as well as the "Gender" categorical variable because we are handling a regression problem for time series data using deep learning. We then selected the partition results from rows into groups based on their values in "Date of Calls," sorted in ascending order, and summed them up to get the total number of calls for each column with the Data of Calls being the index with a unique value for each row.

4.2 Methods of analysis

There are different methods available for modeling univariate time series and forecasting their evolution. Some popular time series models that most companies use to develop their business strategies are Naïve, Snaive, Seasonal decomposition (+any model), Exponential smoothing, ARIMA, SARIMA, Dynamic linear models, Prophet, and LSTM. This kind of time series forecasting model can help in many possible applications, such as weather forecasting, stock price forecasting, business planning, resources allocation, and many others. Since our dataset has a large number of observations with long sequences, noisy data, and multiple inputs variables. The author decided to use an LSTM model of deep learning techniques to forecast the mental health calls for this project. Some details about the other methods that can be used for time series forecasting are as follows:

a. Naive, SNaive:

In the Naïve model, a forecast corresponds to the last value, and it is usually referred to as a random walk. The SNaive, on the other hand, is an extension of the Naïve model, and it assumes that the time series has a seasonal component. These models are often used as benchmark models, and they use the last observed values for predicting the future.

b. Exponential smoothing:

Exponential smoothing is similar to the weighted average technique from the observations of the past data and these corresponding weights decrease in an exponential manner as we go backward in time. This is one of the most successful classical forecasting methods.

c. ARIMA, SARIMA:

ARIMA models are the most widely used approaches for time series forecasting. This is a combination of Auto-Regressive models whose forecasts correspond to a linear combination of past values of the variable and the Moving Average model whose forecasts correspond to a linear combination of past forecast errors. SARIMA is an extension of ARIMA, and it adds a linear combination of past seasonal values and/or forecast values.

d. Dynamic linear models:

DLMs are a special case of linear regression models where the parameters are treated as time-varying rather than static. The distribution follows a normal law. It employs the idea that the models correspond to a linear model every time, but regression coefficients change over time.

e. Prophet:

The prophet is an open-source software established by Facebook's Core Data Science team. The model assumes that g (t), s (t), and h (t) correspond respectively to trend, seasonality, and holiday. The Prophet model is inserted in a Bayesian framework, and it allows making a full posterior inference to include model parameter uncertainty in the forecast uncertainty.

4.3 LSTM, an artificial recurrent neural networks model

We used LSTM, an artificial recurrent neural network used in deep learning. We processed sequences of data and got a feedback connection. LSTM is composed of cells that remember values over arbitrary time intervals. The network classifies, processes, and makes predictions based on time series data because there can be lags of unknown duration between important events in a time series. The method was a success because the models were very reliable. Deep learning methods deliver accurate forecasts of past and future data. The trends analysis keeps the data up to date to ensure the method is as accurate as possible.

4.4 Forecast

We used complex linear regression and compared numerous independent variables with another dependent variable to analyze data. We ran a regression analysis on many variables and delivered great accuracy in data analysis after developing a high-quality dashboard to determine the number of future mental health calls. We aimed to identify caller types from the initial calls by dates, taxonomy names, number of calls, and gender.

5. Results

After we analyzed the primary findings from the capstone project, we found that there was an increase in calls during the pandemic period. We compared the variables of calls of the past years and the ones during the COVID-19 period. Mental health was an issue that needed to be solved, as was evident from the alarming rate at which it was growing. The results are accurate because we used the most recent forecast from the interactive visualization. Plan4Co ensures the effectiveness of the project because the practitioners are experts who are capable of explaining and demonstrating the analysis and forecasts that were produced from the reliable model with ease.

6. Discussion

The organization will use results from the analysis to strategize and by developing new theories and conceptual frameworks in the mental health sector. This enables 2-1-1 Orange County to create community level opportunities that will have a positive effect on treating mental illnesses. After analyzing data, other scientists can improve medical research on mental health because the use of large data results in more accurate analysis. If the forecast is accurate, the model will help future projects on mental health and the needs of hospitals. The causes behind mental health can be identified and detected before contributing to overall planning and shaping public policies.

7. Dashboard

The dashboard is a graphical interface that provides key performance indicators that are relevant to this project. It visualizes data and is always linked to regularly updating data sources.

What is it:

A ML pipeline that takes a call centers caller data from an exported excel sheet from a CRM database and uploads it to a SQL database with thirty days of a forecasted number of calls related to mental health and is then synced with a Microsoft Power BI Pro dashboard visualization that can be inserted into any website that can accept an *IFRAME* html tag.

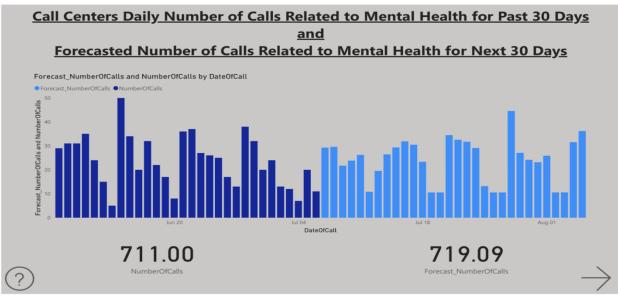


Figure 4: Call Centers Daily Number of Calls Related to Mental Health for Past 30 Days and Forecasted Number of Calls Related to Mental Health for Next 30 Days

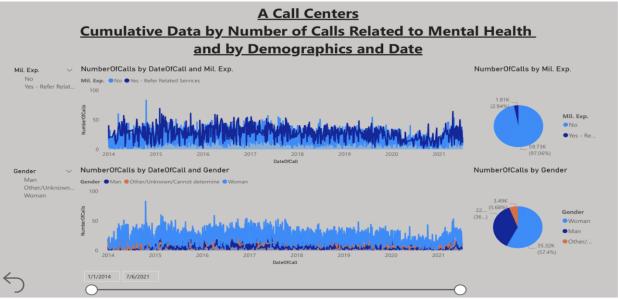


Figure 5: A Call Centers Cumulative Data by Number of Calls Related to Mental Health and by Demographics and Date

8. Reference

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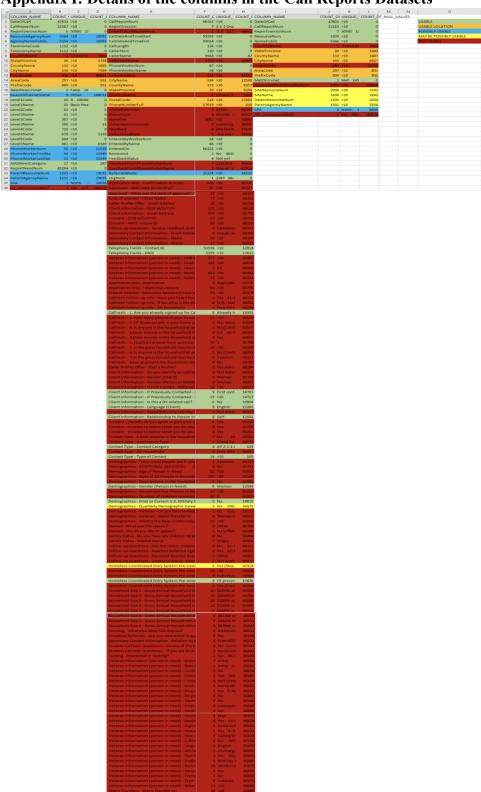
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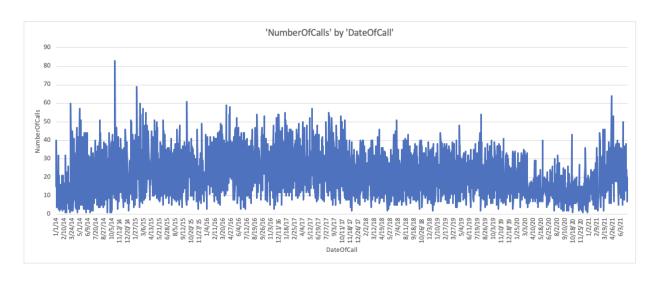
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Appendices

Appendix I: Details of the columns in the Call Reports Datasets



Appendix II: Number of Calls by Date



Appendix III: Percentage of 'Number of Calls' by Taxonomy Name

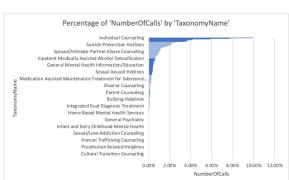
Distinct number of 'TaxonomyCode'

If your data changes, be sure to go back to Analyze Data and ask your question again to get an updated answer.

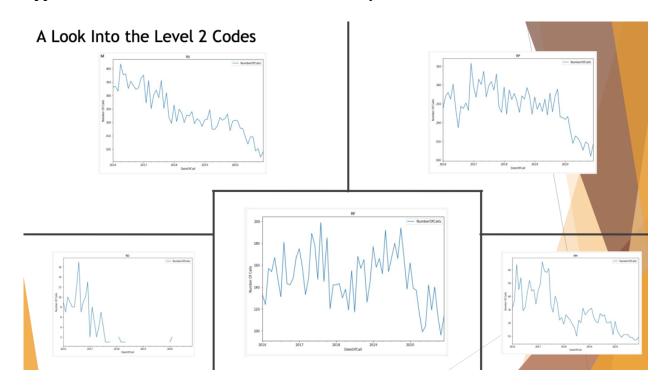


% of total 'NumberOfCalls' by 'TaxonomyName'

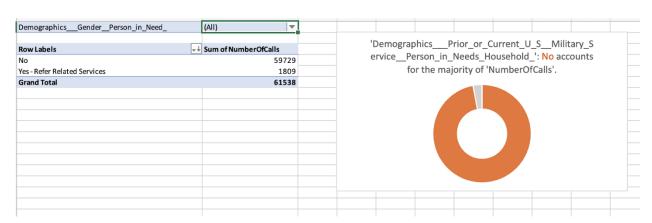




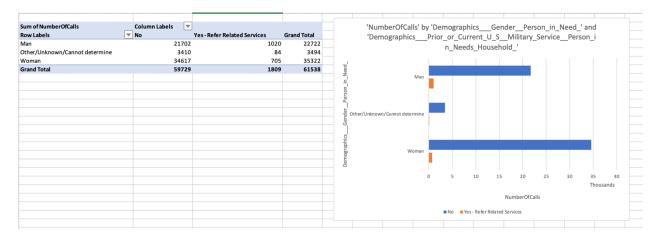
Appendix IV: Number of calls of 'Level 2 Codes' by Date



Appendix V: Number of Calls by "Demographics_Prior_or_Current_U_S_Military_Service_Person_in_Needs_Household"



Appendix VI: Number of Calls of 'Demographics_Prior_or_Current_U_S_Military_Service_Person_in_Needs_Household' by gender



Appendix VII: Mental Health Calls by "Language", "Gender", and "With Current or Prior Military History by Gender"

