

Friday 17th September 2010

2ND SYMPOSIUM ON CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND CLINICAL PRACTICE. “DEVELOPMENT AND EMOTION REGULATION”

8.00am REGISTRATION

8.45am Opening Introduction

Dr John Brennan, Director of Child & Adolescent Mental Health, SCH

9am Social Cognition and its Role in Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Professor Rhoshel Lenroot, UNSW

9.40 am Childhood Origins of Emotion Regulation within the Crucible of the Family

Dr Marc De Rosnay, University of Sydney

10.20 am Clinical Decision Making For Clinicians

Dr Tony Florio, Senior Clinical Psychologist Area Clinical Coordinator - Intellectual Disability & Co existing Mental Illness SESIAHS

11.00 am – 11.30 am MORNING TEA

11.30am – 1pm WORKSHOPS

- 1) **Dialectical Behaviour Therapy in Practice in an Adolescent Mental Health Service**
The Adolescent Service POW
(Repeated in afternoon)
- 2) **Child and Family Mental Health - Improving Pathways for Diverse Local Communities**
Child and Family East Team POW
- 3) **Exercise and Nutrition in the Management of Depression**
Felicity Spencer, Physiotherapist and Anita Darby, Dietitian SCH
(Repeated in afternoon)
- 4) **Where in the Brain is Autism? Implications for Early Intervention with ASD**
Professor Valsa Eapen, UNSW
- 5) **Assessment and Treatment of Childhood Conduct Problems and Comorbid Emotional Disorders: Complex Presentations**
Dr Tracy Rhodes, Clinical Psychologist; and Subodha Wimalaweera, UNSW
(Repeated in afternoon)

1pm – 1.30pm LUNCH

1.30pm – 3pm WORKSHOPS

- 6) **Therapeutic Considerations When Working with Targets and Perpetrators of School Bullying**
Dr Roberto Parada, Clinical Psychologist, University of Western Sydney
- 7) **Positive video-feedback as an intervention for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders**
Elayne McDonald, Psychologist, UNSW

3pm – 3.30pm AFTERNOON TEA

3.30pm Love, Eye Contact and the Origins of Empathy Versus Psychopathy

Professor Mark Dadds, UNSW

4 pm The Treatment of Conduct Problems in Children with Callous-Unemotional Traits: What We Know So Far

Dr David Hawes, University of Sydney

4.30 pm Parent-Child Emotion Socialisation and Callous-Unemotional Traits in Boys with Early Onset Conduct Problems

David Pasalich, Clinical Psychologist, UNSW

ABSTRACTS

PROFESSOR RHOSHEL LENROOT, UNSW

Social Cognition and it's Role in Neurodevelopmental Disorders

The ability to skilfully navigate social situations is a critical cognitive capacity for successful function. Social cognition includes the mental operations underlying social interactions such as perceiving, interpreting and responding to the intentions, dispositions, and behaviours of others. It depends on other cognitive abilities (visual processing, ability to pay attention, plan ahead, etc) but, there is also evidence of a unique component.

Social cognitive abilities are impaired in many common psychiatric disorders, including Autism, Conduct Disorder and Schizophrenia. This talk will review recent research regarding the nature of social cognition, relevant brain regions, how it develops during infancy, childhood, and adolescence, and how it is affected in neurodevelopmental disorders such as Autism and Schizophrenia.

DR TONY FLORIO, SENIOR CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, AREA CLINICAL COORDINATOR – INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY & CO EXISTING MENTAL ILLNESS, SESIAHS

Diagnosis and the Prediction of Individual Clinical Outcomes

Diagnosis and the prediction of individual clinical outcomes are both cornerstones of clinical practice. In the past hundred years there has been a very large amount of scientific investigation into how to best carry out these clinical practices. But most mental health clinicians are generally unaware of this body of scientific evidence and ignore it when it comes to their own clinical decision-making practices.

Research by Kahneman (awarded a Nobel Prize in 2002) and colleagues, has found that most mental health clinicians are overly optimistic about their own clinical decision making abilities. They tend to overestimate the real accuracy of their diagnoses and clinical predictions. As such they often shun the use of more accurate structured and mechanical forms of clinical decision making, when they are available.

In this presentation we will review some of the science on

- the nature of clinical decision making by clinicians
- basis principles of classification
- diagnostic decision making
- methods of statistical prediction and pattern recognition.

We will make recommendations for how you can change and improve your clinical practices now and where clinical decision making practices might be heading in future.

PROFESSOR MARK DADDS, UNSW

Love, Eye Contact and the Origins of Empathy Versus Psychopathy

Links between dysfunctional parent-child interaction and antisocial behaviour is well established. However, recent studies have demonstrated that parenting, defined by ineffective parenting practices (e.g. inconsistency, poor monitoring) is not associated with conduct problems in children with callous-unemotional (CU) traits.

The aim of this paper is to test the hypothesis that the effective climate of parent-child dynamics is more strongly related to the conduct problems of children who have restricted affect and display shallow emotions (high CU). 130 families of boys (aged 3 to 12 years) diagnosed with either oppositional defiance disorder or conduct disorder participated in observational family assessments and provided reports on child behaviour. We used three different theoretically informed approaches to the measurement of affective parent-child interaction:

- 1) parents' warmth and criticism expressed during family interaction
- 2) parents' warmth and criticism expressed during a five-minute speech sample regarding their child
- 3) parents' coaching of emotions during parent-child emotion talk.

Results will be discussed in relation to the claim that CU traits moderate links between parenting and antisocial behaviour, and thus have important implications for parenting interventions for conduct problems.

DR DAVID HAWES, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

The Treatment of Conduct Problems in Children with Callous-Unemotional Traits: What we Know So Far

There is now considerable evidence to suggest that conduct problems develop through somewhat distinct mechanisms in children with high versus low levels of callous-unemotional (CU) traits. One of the most clinically important assumptions of this model concerns the differential role of parenting practices in these two pathways. While coercive parenting is believed to be proximal to the development of conduct problems in children with low levels of CU traits, in children with high levels of these traits conduct problems appear to be less directly related to such parenting.

Consistent with this, our previous research has shown that young oppositional boys characterised by high levels of CU traits benefit less from parent-training intervention than those who are free from these traits (Hawes & Dadds, 2005). Recent findings from this line of research will be presented, and the application of this evidence to clinical practice discussed.

DAVID PASALICH, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, UNSW

Parent-Child Emotion Socialisation and Callous-Unemotional Traits in Boys with Early-Onset Conduct Problems

Children with early-onset conduct problems and callous-unemotional (CU) traits have a greater risk of developing psychopathy later in life due to their deficits in emotion processing and empathy. Recent research suggests that high CU children fail to pay attention to salient emotional cues (e.g. the eyes) and lack responsiveness to other's distress. However, no study to date has investigated the early emotional experiences of high CU children in the context of parent-child relationship is considered to have an enduring effect on an individual's affective interpersonal style.

On this note, we observed the style of parent-child emotion socialisation (emotion expression, reaction to emotions, connectedness) in 70 families of boys (3 to 9 years) clinic-referred for their conduct problems, while parents attempted to emotionally connect with their child (i.e. while reminiscing on shared emotional experiences).

It is hypothesised that CU traits will be associated with lower levels of parent-child emotion expression and connectedness, and more negative parent and child reactions to emotion utterances. The implications of these results for early parenting interventions for CU conduct problems will be discussed.

Workshops

1. THE ADOLESCENT SERVICE

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy in Practice in an Adolescent Mental Health Service

Staff of the Adolescent Service at Prince of Wales Hospital including Dr Jackie Canessa, Nicole Emdur-Apps, Dr Beth Salgado, Dianne Fitzjames and Alice Baldwin will present their use of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy with adolescents with a range of mental health presentations. Both individual DBT and group skills training will be discussed.

2. CHILD AND FAMILY EAST TEAM - Dr JO LEVY AND NORA O'LOUGHLIN

Improving Pathways for Diverse Local Communities

Aims of Workshop:

- Sharing of innovative practice in improving access to child & family mental health services for diverse local communities.
- Outline of theoretical influences including, literature on prevention and early intervention work with families, transcultural mental health & systems theory.

3. FELICITY SPENCER, PHYSIOTHERAPIST; AND ANITA DARBY, DIETICIAN, SYDNEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Exercise and Nutrition in the Management of Depression

How what we eat and how we move can manage the symptoms of depression, moderate our risk of developing depression and prevent lifestyle diseases in those suffering depression.

Anita Darby and Felicity Spencer, dietician and physiotherapist for the SCH inpatient mental health team will lead this interactive workshop that focuses on holistic multidisciplinary management of depression.

This workshop will describe the emerging evidence base for the role of exercise and nutrition in

- The prevention of depression
- The treatment of depression
- The prevention of lifestyle diseases to which those people suffering from depression have increased risk.

We will discuss the efficacy of various types of exercise including aerobic training, strength training, complex motor skills acquisition and mindful movement, as well as dose response to exercise. We will also discuss some practical ways to improve nutrition for this target group. The workshop will include gentle experiential activities.

4. PROFESSOR VALSA EAPEN, UNSW

Where in the Brain is Autism? Implications for Early Intervention

Available research data in Autism suggests the role of a network of brain areas, often known as the 'social brain'. It is hypothesized that the deficits in social cognition and related neurocognitive functions in Autism results from reduced synchronization between these key brain regions during different social and emotional tasks: recent research suggests autism to be a 'neural connectivity disorder'.

These interconnected neural systems can be understood through the relationship between functionally relevant anatomic areas and neurochemical pathways, the programming of which are genetically modulated during neurodevelopment and mediated through a range of neuropeptides and interacting neurotransmitter systems.

Understanding these neurobiological underpinnings can lead to the design of interventions that accommodate the way the brains of children with autism function and may lead to the promotion of more flexible thinking and learning. Furthermore, since genetically mediated deficits and consequent functional impairments involve activity-dependent synapse development that depends on postnatal learning and experience, early intervention can prevent or reduce the risk of these deficits cascading into a trajectory toward full expression of the disorder. In this regard, it has been suggested that, autism emerges from a developmental cascade in which a fundamental deficit in attention to social stimuli beginning as early as infancy leads to impaired interactions with primary caregivers. This results in abnormal development of the neurocircuitry responsible for social cognition, which in turn adversely affects later behavioural and functional domains such as language development dependent on these early processes. Such a model implies the importance of intervening early to prevent downstream effects, and is supported by studies showing greater efficacy with early intervention programs which seek to counteract this early deficit and normalize the development of social and communicative capacities through provision of heavily enriched social stimuli by therapists and caregivers. This offers an opportunity to interrupt the sequence of events that would otherwise have resulted in an abnormal developmental trajectory, but instead promote interactions that normalize basic brain responses to social stimuli and alter the course of development by exploiting the neuronal maturation and brain plasticity in the early years of life.

5. DR TRACY RHODES, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, UNSW; and SUBODHA WIMALAWEERA, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, UNSW AND ROYAL FAR WEST

Assessment & Treatment of Childhood Conduct Problems and Comorbid Emotional Disorders

Antisocial behaviour in childhood and adolescence is a significant cause of distress to parents, mental health professionals, and the wider community. It is associated with negative outcomes and psychosocial impairments, such as development of persistent behavioural problems and/or additional emotional or substance abuse disorders. This workshop will review current theoretical models and practical approaches in the assessment and treatment of childhood antisocial behaviour and its related comorbidities (e.g. anxiety).

The three major areas that will be covered include

- 1) an overview of developmental models and common pathways of antisocial behaviour
- 2) an integrated process orientated approach to assessment and functional analysis of complex presentations
- 3) an evidenced based intervention for comorbid antisocial behaviour and emotional problems; with a specific focus on a group Cognitive Behavioural intervention model.

The workshop will conclude with a discussion of the practical application of the outlined strategies in relation to experiential examples drawn from our own experiences in working with these children. The outcomes are for mental health professionals to feel confident in their ability to identify, assess and treat complex presentations, such as antisocial behaviour and its associated comorbid disorders.

6. DR ROBERTO PARADA , CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY

Therapeutic Considerations When Working With Targets and Perpetrators of School Bullying

Based on information gained through large scale Australian Research and Clinical Practice Dr Parada will be highlighting what are the expected psychological profiles of young people involved in bullying. Based on this experience he will present a suggested model of intervention when working with these young people.

This model draws on Cognitive Behavioural Techniques as well as being informed on the most current research on Social Identity Theory and the enhancement of self-concept.

7. ELAYNE MCDONALD, PSYCHOLOGIST, UNSW AND ROYAL FAR WEST

Positive video-feedback as an intervention for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders

This workshop describes an intervention directed at enhancing the social interaction skills of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Video-Assisted Parent-Child Therapy originated from observation work regarding the inter-subjectivity experience of young children (Trevarthen, 1979). It is largely based on an approach entitled “Video Interactive Guidance” which was developed in the Netherland by Harrie Biemans. This workshop will describe how this video-assisted intervention has been utilised as part of a larger study investigating the clinical efficacy of Oxytocin (OT) in improving functioning in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Workshop Content

- An overview of the clinical efficacy study being conducted by the University of New South Wales
- An introduction into Colwyn Trevarthen’s work regarding inter-subjectivity and how this is fundamental when we think about interventions for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- A brief overview of theories of change which use self-modelling and video feedback
- Video-Assisted Parent-Child Therapy in action: an introduction to this approach will be presented followed by video footage showing therapy in action.