

Exploring the needs of service users with a co-existing mental health and neurodevelopmental disorder accessing Mental Health Services in CTUHB

Background

Previous research indicates a link between children and adults with neurodevelopmental disorders and co-occurring mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression.



Lingam and colleagues (2012) identified an increased risk of mental health difficulties in children with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) and Kirby et al. (2013) found that adults with DCD report high levels of depressive symptoms and anxiety. This indicates a link between DCD and increased likelihood of experiencing clinical levels of depression and/or anxiety.

Increased emotional and behavioural difficulties have also been reported in children with Specific Language Impairment compared to typically developing children (Yew and O'Kearney, 2012).

Likewise, there appears to be a link between Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and depression and anxiety. Strang and colleagues (2012) identified that the rates of depression and anxiety in 6 to 18 year olds with ASD were higher than that of the general population.

Overall, cumulative findings indicate that there could be a link between neurodevelopmental disorders and mental health disorders. Given this, the purpose of this study is to work in collaboration with Cwm Taf University Health Board to evaluate their innovative mental health and neurodevelopmental disorders service.

References

Kirby, A., Williams, N., Thomas, M. and Hill, E.L. (2013) 'Self-Reported Mood, General Health, Wellbeing and Employment Status in Adults with Suspected DCD', *Research in Developmental Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 34(4), 1357-1364. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23417140>

Lingam, R., Jongmans, M.J., Ellis, M., Hunt, L.P., Golding, J. and Emond, A. (2012) 'Mental health difficulties in children with developmental coordination disorder', *Pediatrics*, 129(4), 882-91. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22451706>

Proposed Methodology

This project will utilise a qualitative approach whereby approximately 60 service users will be recruited to take part in focus groups/interviews. The aim is to investigate whether the mental health and neurodevelopmental disorders service is currently meeting service user needs and identify where improvements can be made.

Service users for this study include individuals within the West Wales and Valleys region, that have a co-occurring neurodevelopmental and mental health disorder, who are accessing services within the Cwm Taf University Health Board. Access to service users will be facilitated through the Health Board and the Occupational Therapist lead from the Autism Spectrum Disorders Occupational Therapy Service.



Working with service users will ensure that they are involved in how the services they use are planned and delivered. Service users will be aged between 18 and 65 and must be accessing mental health services or support in either primary or secondary care, or through inpatient services.

The two main objectives of this project are to establish:

- 1) The needs of the service users, and
- 2) Whether the service users feel their needs are being met.

This study has the potential to inform the Health Board's service delivery model which could lead to better outcomes for service users.

The Research Team

Chelsea Courts

Chelsea graduated from the University of South Wales in 2017, having studied BSc Psychology with Criminology. Chelsea is interested in Developmental Psychology, in particular Neurodevelopmental Disorders and attachment.



Dr. Anne Fothergill

Anne Fothergill is an experienced mental health lecturer and researcher. She has been a mental health nurse for 30 years and has a variety of research and teaching interests.



Dr. Catherine Purcell

Catherine Purcell is a Senior Lecturer at the University of South Wales. Catherine's research interests focus on gaining a better understanding of the implications of neurodevelopmental disorders on daily living and participation. Catherine is also joint head of Research Dyscovery.



Prof. Joyce Kenkre

Joyce Kenkre is Professor of Primary Care at the University of South Wales and Associate Director for PRIME Centre Wales. She has conducted over 70 research projects with research articles on the prevalence of heart failure, the cost of accidents in the elderly, evaluation of routine enquiry for domestic abuse, careers for nurses in research, and fraud.



Emma Westall

Emma Westall is a Highly Specialised Autism Spectrum Disorders/Mental Health Occupational Therapist who works as a practitioner helping people identified with ASD and coexisting mental disorders.

