MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
OCTOBER 2014

The 2014 theme for NSW Mental Health Month is ‘Be YOUunique’. It’s about self-acceptance, being unique, taking pride in yourself and celebrating your strengths—all of which can enrich your mental health and wellbeing.

SELF-REPORTED CONTACTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS BY RURAL RESIDENTS: PREDICTED SERVICE NEEDS, FACILITATORS & BARRIERS

Rural and remote Australians face a range of barriers to mental health care, potentially limiting the extent to which current services and support networks may provide assistance. This paper examines self-reported mental health problems and contacts during the last 12 months, and explores cross-sectional associations between potential facilitators/barriers and professional and non-professional help-seeking, while taking into account expected associations with socio-demographic and health-related factors.

SOURCE: Tonelle Handley, Frances Kay-Lambkin, Kerry Inder, Terry Lewin, John Attia, Jeffrey Fuller, David Perkins, Clare Coleman, Natasha Weaver and Brian Kelly (2014) Self-reported contacts for mental health problems by rural residents: predicted service needs, facilitators and barriers. BMC psychiatry, 14:249 doi: 10.1186/1471-244X-14-249


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EFFECTIVENESS OF LEFT ANTERIOR RIGHT TEMPORAL ELECTRODE PLACEMENT IN ELECTROCONVULSIVE THERAPY: 3 CASE REPORTS

Unilateral and bitemporal electrode placement has been the dominant mode of delivery in electroconvulsive therapy. We report 3 patients receiving maintenance electroconvulsive therapy where the use of dominant electrode placements was ineffective. Changing to left anterior right temporal electrode placement resulted in marked clinical improvement. This supports the limited literature on this electrode placement.


L-R: ALAN WEISS, IVAN SAFRANKO, SHANE HANSEN & PEQUITTA HUGHES—CLINICAL RESOURCES / ECT CLINIC, HNEMH

Available via CIAP
PLAYING SUPER MARIO INDUCES STRUCTURAL BRAIN PLASTICITY

Video gaming is a highly pervasive activity, providing a multitude of complex cognitive and motor demands. Gaming can be seen as an intense training of several skills. This study found that video game training augments gray matter in brain areas crucial for spatial navigation, strategic planning, working memory and motor performance going along with evidence for behavioural changes of navigation strategy. The authors suggest that the presented video game training could therefore be used to counteract known risk factors for mental disease such as smaller hippocampus and prefrontal cortex volume in, for example, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia and neurodegenerative disease.


NEW MENTAL HEALTH GAME APPS FROM VIRTUALLY FREE

A couple of UK psychiatrists have collaborated to create two game apps (another on the way) to try to make therapy “more fun, more accessible and more affordable. We also believe in empowering people with tools to take control of their own experiences.” Read more about the creators.

The apps (only currently available for Apple users) are ‘Stress Free’ (which is free to download) and ‘Phobia Free’ (which costs £2.49—approx. $4.50). Android versions are in development. Read more about the apps. ‘Phobia Free’ has been approved and reviewed by the NHS. Browse more health apps on the NHS health apps library.

ANY SUGGESTIONS?

The staff of HNE Health Libraries value your input. We appreciate any recommendations or suggestions and are happy to discuss them.

RECENT ARTICLES

NB. Articles in dark blue or bold text have Australian content


Infant mental health journal, 30(5) 2014 - special issue: Very young children and their fathers


Gunderson, J. et al. (2014) Interactions of borderline personality disorder and mood disorders over 10 years. *Journal of clinical psychiatry*, 75(8), 839-834


NB. Articles listed in the newsletter aren’t necessarily available FREE. We’re just letting you know what’s available! If you’ve checked HNEH Libraries’ eJournals portal (found under ‘eJournals’ in the Quick Links box on our website) and can’t find the article, contact your local HNEH Library for further assistance. (Contact details—p.4) HNE Health Libraries will be able to supply most articles—but there may be charges.
ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS FOR COGNITIVE COMMUNICATION DISORDERS FOLLOWING TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY IN ADULTS: AN INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

The objective of this study was to examine the current assessment practices of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) working with adults with acquired cognitive communication impairments following a traumatic brain injury. 265 SLPs from the UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand responded to the online survey stating the areas of communication frequently assessed and the assessment tools they use.

SLPs reported that they routinely assessed functional communication (78.8%), whereas domains such as discourse were routinely assessed by less than half of the group (44.3%). Clinicians used aphasia and cognitive communication/high level language tools and tools assessing functional performance, discourse, pragmatic skills or informal assessments were used by less than 10% of the group. The country and setting of service delivery influenced choice of assessment tools used in clinical practice.

These findings have implications for training of SLPs in a more diverse range of assessment tools for this clinical group. The findings raise questions regarding the statistical validity and reliability of assessments currently used in clinical practice. It highlights the need for further research into how SLPs can be supported in translating current evidence about the use of assessment tools into clinical practice.


Not available via CIAP or Library subscription—contact HNEH Libraries to access the article

FROM BLUES TO RAINBOWS: THE MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF GENDER DIVERSE & TRANSGENDER YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

This research from La Trobe University was designed to expand on findings from previous Australian research that found that gender-questioning and transgender young people not only experienced higher rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, but were also more likely to be involved in activism than their cisgender and same-sex attracted peers. This later finding is a potentially positive one and points to the need for research to not only explore the mental health needs of these young people but also the ways in which they advocate and care for themselves in the face of discrimination and abuse.

PLACEBO FOR DEPRESSION: ARE SOME SUGAR PILLS BETTER THAN OTHERS?

This review from the UK evidence-based ‘Mental Elf’ blog discusses recent “thought provoking” research into the placebo effect in relation to depression and the use of antidepressant medication. There are links to further articles, commentaries by interested authors and blogs providing supplementary reading on the placebo effect.

LEARNING COLLABORATIVES IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Policy makers have increasingly turned to learning collaboratives (LCs) as a strategy for improving usual care through the dissemination of evidence-based practices. Yet there is minimal evidence of their effectiveness and unclear reporting in regard to specific components. The purpose of this systematic review was to characterize the state of the evidence for use of LCs in mental health care.


MADNESS AT THE MOVIES: PRIORITISED MOVIES FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING BY MEDICAL STUDENTS

Ten movies “systematically selected to facilitate self-directed learning in psychiatry by medical students. All appeared to have relatively high entertainment value together with rich content in terms of psychiatric themes.”

- Another Year (2010), Passion Fish (1992) – alcohol use disorders
- The Devil and Daniel Johnston (2006), and An Angel at My Table (1990) – schizophrenia


NEW AUDIO DIGEST CdS (PSYCHIATRY)

Update on child and adolescent psychiatry
43(17) 2014

Trauma spectrum disorders in children and adolescents / SSRIs and adolescents: 10 years after the black box warning

CAN INTERMITTENT FASTING IMPROVE MOOD?

“Intermittent fasting is all the rage these days and has been the subject of popular documentaries, websites and books.” The claims made would seem too good to be true, but are they? This review from the UK evidence-based ‘Mental Elf’ blog discusses the pros and cons of recent research on the effects of calorie restriction and intermittent bouts of fasting.

JAPAN UNVEILS ‘ANTI-LONELINESS’ CHAIR

A Japanese firm (UniCare) has unveiled a new chair designed to comfort older people living alone. Known as a “tranquility chair”, it is built in the shape of a larger-than-life fabric doll with a friendly face and long arms that wrap around the user in an affectionate embrace. “It makes you feel safe. Anyone can use it, but it is designed for older people,” said a spokesman. The chair is priced at 46,000 yen (419 dollars) and there is also a version adapted for wheelchair users.

Also on display were UniCare’s “Life Rhythm Dolls”, which are programmed to remind their owners to take their medicine or go to the toilet at certain times of day. “They are comforting for people who live alone – they can talk to them and hug them. They also play old Japanese music, which is nostalgic for older people” said the company spokesman.
NOW AVAILABLE VIA THE LIBRARY WEBSITE

If you weren't able to attend this year's Quality and Scientific Program you can still catch up with all the proceedings thanks to HNE Health Libraries. For the first time, all of the presentations were recorded and are now available online. The theme this year was ‘Health Law, Ethics and Equity: What is the Connection?’

All sessions (in a variety of formats) are now available via the Clinical Governance section of the HNE Health libraries website (found under the ‘Education’ tab). You will also find other education and professional development sessions, including Grand Rounds and Clinical Ethics Forum.

**BRAINS, GENES & CHEMICAL IMBALANCE: HOW EXPLANATIONS OF MENTAL ILLNESS AFFECT STIGMA**

Nick Haslam, Professor of Psychology at University of Melbourne contemplates stigma in ‘The Conversation’.

Depression, schizophrenia and other psychiatric conditions are increasingly linked to abnormalities in the brain and in our genes. Many professionals believe these developments hold the key to better treatments and their enthusiasm has spread. The public now endorses biogenetic (biological and genetic) explanations for mental health problems much more than in previous decades.

One possible side effect of these developments is a reduction in stigma. If the cause of psychiatric misery is in our brain chemistry or our DNA, then the miserable cannot be blamed for their symptoms. Advocates argue that stigma will diminish if we come to see mental health problems as biologically caused diseases, no different from diabetes or cancer.

This is an appealingly optimistic view, linking scientific advance to social progress. Unfortunately, it may also be wrong. Many writers have argued that seeing mental health problems as biogenetically caused diseases increases stigma. Believing that a person has a deep-seated biological defect may lead us to see them as unpredictable, incurable and categorically different from the rest of us.

**STOMP OUT STIGMA**

ARAFMI Hunter is celebrating Newcastle's 10th annual ‘Walk of Pride’ this Saturday 18th October, 2014 - beginning in Pacific Park at 10am. Celebrations to help de-stigmatise mental illness and promote awareness of mental health will be held in Civic Park at the end of the march.

**CIAP UPDATE – MIMS FOR ANDROID**

MIMS for Android is available to Australian Google Play store subscribers and is now free of charge to NSW Health staff. MIMS for Android provides convenient mobile access to MIMS’s Australian pharmaceutical database with detailed information on thousands of different medications. To find out more and learn how to download the app – visit the [CIAP mobile site](#) and select ‘Android Apps’. Other apps available via CIAP for Android devices include: BMJ Best Practice, Micromedex drug interactions/reference, Mosby's Nursing Consult, Lab Tests Online-AU and LactMed. iApps are also available from the mobile site.

**NED KELLY – STOCK THIEF, BANK ROBBER, MURDERER – PSYCHOPATH?**

Interesting alternate view of Ned Kelly as a violent and vindictive man who demonstrated prominent psychopathic features including pathological lying, callous lack of empathy for others and a parasitic lifestyle. “As Kelly terrorised country Victoria, he showed little concern other than for his own gratification and self-justification. Kelly’s own florid diatribes and correspondence further illuminate his grandiose sense of self-worth and his inability to accept responsibility for his criminality.”


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