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Conduct disorder: A retrospective record review of patients diagnosed with conduct disorder at Tara Psychiatric Hospital Children's Clinic

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Aim & Objective: Conduct Disorder is a serious psychiatric disorder with onset in childhood and adolescence and antisocial behaviour which may continue into adulthood. Characteristic externalising behaviours have the potential to negatively impact on the wellbeing of the individual as well as on societal interactions. The aim of this study was to review the records of children and adolescents with a diagnosis of Conduct Disorder at a local specialised psychiatric hospital to identify possible associated factors.

Method: Clinical files at The Tara, H. Moross Centre's Child and Adolescent Clinic were reviewed and those with Conduct Disorder were identified. Variables in the dataset included gender, referral source, age at symptom onset, age when diagnosis was made, schooling, co-morbid diagnoses, pregnancy/ birth history, perinatal complications, attachment, primary caregiver, milestones, discipline style, exposure to violence/ abuse/ neglect, social circumstances, other conditions that may be a focus of clinical attention ("V" or "Z" codes), family psychiatric history and interventions. Descriptive and comparative statistical analyses of the data were performed.

Result: A total of 953 files were reviewed, of which 107 (11.2%) of the mental health care users were diagnosed with having Conduct Disorder. Associated factors included: (1) having a parent as the primary caregiver seemed to have been a protective factor; while (2) exposure to violence, abuse or neglect, having a family history of Antisocial Personality Disorder, or having 2 or more "V" or "Z" codes, were significantly more often associated with severe conduct disordered features.

Conclusion: Considering these factors associated with an increased risk, may help to develop strategies for earlier detection and intervention in children and adolescents at risk.

Biography

Claire Lownie graduated with her medical degree (MBBCh) from Wits University in 2003. She completed her internship at Groote Schuur Hospital (2004) and her community service at a district hospital in Kokstad (2005). In 2006, she was diagnosed with a Stage-4 Malignant Melanoma. Thereafter, Dr Lownie worked for several years as a clinical trial coordinator, research programme manager and ultimately Trauma Programme Manager at Milpark Hospital. She completed a Master of Science in Emergency Medicine degree (MSc Med Emergency Medicine) and worked clinically in various private Emergency Departments. In 2012 Dr Lownie left Netcare to work in the corporate pharmaceutical environment. The combination of personal and professional experiences piqued her interest in Psychiatry and mental health. She subsequently completed her specialist training in the Department of Psychiatry at Wits University and obtained her specialist fellowship (FC Psych SA) through the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa in May 2018. Dr Lownie currently runs her private practice in Bryanston. She treats a variety of mental illnesses and is passionate about working with children and adolescents.

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