The development and evaluation of a child and adolescent mental health webinar series

Objectives Increasingly, paediatricians see children and adolescents with mental health concerns in a variety of clinical settings. While mental health features on paediatric postgraduate training curricula nationally and internationally, previous research suggests paediatricians continue to feel ill-equipped in the assessment and management of child and adolescent mental health, in part due to insufficient training. This has been associated with suboptimal coping behaviours, such as clinicians not addressing mental health issues when they arise.

To improve access to child and adolescent mental health education, and therefore, improve mental health care for children and young people, we introduced a free child and adolescent mental health webinar series via the Paediatric Mental Health Association.

Methods Webinar topics were decided by considering mental health presentations frequently seen in clinical practice, and using the mental health themes highlighted in the RCPCH general and sub-specialty paediatric postgraduate curricula. The webinars were initially delivered fortnightly and then monthly by subject experts, including paediatricians, psychologists, and psychiatrists. While webinars were primarily aimed at paediatricians, all healthcare professionals with an interest in child mental health were welcomed.

Subject matter webinars were interspersed with webinars to promote mental health paediatrics as a specialty, enabling more junior staff to interact with those established in the field. Some webinars were held in conjunction with other special interest groups. Each webinar was evaluated using qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. In addition, attendees were asked to consider whether the webinars would change their clinical practice, and how this may occur, in keeping with level three of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model.

Results Between June 2021 and June 2022, 18 webinars took place. There were usually 25–40 attendees from across the UK and beyond, and across different healthcare disciplines.

The webinars consistently scored highly for relevance (94.2%) and utility (93.5%), and generally scored highly for promoting change in practice (79%). When considering how the webinars would influence practice change, qualitative data suggests this would be via improved communication, clinical knowledge acquisition, development of personal clinical practice, and improved team working. Qualitative data also indicated some attendees felt attendance and engagement in webinars led to the formation of a new community, with one attendee stating the webinars ‘really made me feel like I had found my people’.

Conclusions The webinars were introduced to improve access to child and adolescent mental health education for paediatricians. We provided curriculum-aligned teaching and offered a space where staff interested in child and adolescent mental health could meet other like-minded individuals. The data collected suggests the webinars promoted behavioural change via a range of means, which we hope will translate into improved mental health care for children and young people.

REFERENCES

A retrospective study establishing the reasons for adolescents to present to the UHNM Paediatric Gynaecology clinic

Objectives Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology is a diverse subspecialty of gynaecology, covering important issues for adolescents, including menstrual disorders and contraception. The primary objective of this study is to establish the most common reasons for adolescent presentation to a specialist paediatric gynaecology outpatient clinic as well as to understand the symptoms associated with menstruation that cause adolescents to present to secondary care services.

Methods A retrospective study was conducted using electronic documents and outpatient clinic letters to establish patient demographics, clinical details, investigations undertaken and management. The records of 595 patients who attended the Paediatric Gynaecology Clinic at the University Hospital of North Midlands (UHNM) across a 5 year period between July 2016 to June 2021 were analysed. Cases were analysed by age, presentation, investigations undertaken, diagnosis and any management required. Those with incomplete medical records were excluded from the analysis. Details from any follow-up appointments within the 5-year window were included within the clinical picture. Patients aged over 10 years old were considered adolescents within this analysis, to align with World Health Organisation (WHO) definitions.

Results Across the 595 patients included in the analysis, 433 (72.8%) were considered adolescent (≥10 years old). Across the adolescent population, there were 31 different reasons for presentation. The three most common reasons were menstrual disorders (44.6%), secondary amenorrhoea (9.0%) and abdominal pain (8.5%). Regarding menstrual disorders, the most common reason for presentation was heavy menstrual bleeding, affecting 64% of those presenting with menstrual symptoms and 29% of the total adolescents who presented to the clinic. Other concerns, such as oligomenorrhoea and dysmenorrhoea, affected 45% and 31% of those presenting with menstrual symptoms respectively. In total, heavy menstrual bleeding accounted for 20% of the total caseload of the paediatric gynaecology clinic across the 5 years analysed.