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The review of unmet support needs for caregivers of children and adolescents with mental health issues

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Background: The key developmental process during adolescence is to individuate from parents, however, the parental attitude is one of the significant factors to impact their treatment outcome. The act of seeking mental health support is known to be a barrier for young people and the caregivers play pivotal role in liaising young people with mental health services. While Australia is fully funding National Youth Mental Health Foundation which provides psychological and psychiatric counselling, parental support is out of its funding system.

Aim: The aim of this study is to review the influence of parents in the initial engagement of children and adolescents (aged 12-26) to mental health care support and the occurrence of need for the parental support.

Method: Data were obtained from the detailed record of the intake contacts received from 1st November to 30th November 2016 at headspace Chatswood (N = 118). The data includes the name of the initial caller, the young person's name, DOB, contact number, the summary of each interaction and the outcome including the follow ups.

Results: Of the 118 intake enquiries, 59(50.0%) were from parents of young people who were concerned about their children's mental health issues. 10 (16.9%) of these parents requested specifically for further parental support at the time of initial contact by phone or direct walk-in. 4 out of 10 of these parents were from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. Among the 118 intake calls, 36(30.5%) were self-referral from young people seeking mental health support.

Biography

Machiko Minegishi has her expertise in child and adolescent general pediatrics and the provision of comprehensive care for the children and young people with chronic health conditions in Japan. After years of experiences in pediatric health care, research and teaching both in hospital and education institutions in Japan, she extended her interest in the realm of youth mental health and social welfare through her study in Australia. The case report from her placement at Headspace Chatswood, Australia demonstrates the need for raising awareness among health care professionals about suicide risks of adolescents with T1DM, who have easy access to the means of self-harm.

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