

We believe that it is worthwhile to further investigate the potential of targeted patient-feedback after depression screening as an easily implementable complement to more intensive interventions in depressed cardiac patients.

- 1 Löwe B, Blankenberg S, Wegscheider K, König H-H, Walter D, Murray AM, et al. Depression screening with patient-targeted feedback in cardiology: DEPSCREEN-INFO randomised clinical trial. *Br J Psychiatry* 2017; **210**: 132–9.
- 2 Kohlmann S, Kilbert MS, Ziegler K, Schulz KH. Supportive care needs in patients with cardiovascular disorders. *Patient Educ Couns* 2013; **91**: 378–84.
- 3 Kohlmann S, Gierk B, Murray AM, Scholl A, Lehmann M, Löwe B. Base rates of depressive symptoms in patients with coronary heart disease: an individual symptom analysis. *PLoS ONE*, 2016; **11**: e0156167.
- 4 Lossnitzer N, Wild B, Schultz JH, Frankenstein L, Haass M, Rauch B, et al. Potentially modifiable correlates of functional status in patients with chronic heart failure. *Int J Behav Med* 2014; **21**: 956–60.
- 5 Smolderen KG, Buchanan DM, Gosch K, Whooley MA, Chan PS, Vaccarino V, et al. Depression treatment and 1-year mortality following acute myocardial infarction: insights from the TRIUMPH registry. *Circulation*, 2017; doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.116.025140.

Bernd Löwe, MD, Professor of Medicine, Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf, Martinistrasse 52, 20246 Hamburg, Germany. Email: b.loewe@uke.de; **Benjamin Gierk**, MSc, Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf and Schön Klinik Hamburg-Eilbek, Hamburg, Germany; **Sebastian Kohlmann**, PhD, Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf and Schön Klinik Hamburg-Eilbek, Hamburg, Germany, for the DEPSCREEN-INFO study group

doi: 10.1192/bjp.210.6.437a

Communication skills training for psychiatrists

It is encouraging to see studies emerge regarding communication skills training for psychiatrists.¹ Although the authors claim that this is the first study to test an intervention for psychiatrists to enhance communication with patients with psychosis, we would like to draw readers' attention to other work that has been published in this area. In Australia, since 2013, an advanced communication skills training programme for postgraduate psychiatry trainees (ComPsych) has been part of psychiatry trainees' formal postgraduate education.² This focuses on improving doctor–patient communication about schizophrenia diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. Two pilot studies have been published about this programme: evaluating trainees' attitudes and self-efficacy regarding the programme and their confidence in their own communication skills;³ and an objective evaluation of their skills using standardised patient assessments.⁴ It is our hope to continue this important work, and we are encouraged to also see the work done by the authors of this paper.

- 1 McCabe R, John P, Dooley J, Healey P, Cushing A, Kingdon D, et al. Training to enhance psychiatrist communication with patients with psychosis (TEMPO): cluster randomised controlled trial. *Br J Psychiatry* 2016; **209**: 517–24.
- 2 Ditton-Phare P, Halpin S, Sandhu H, Kelly B, Vamos M, Outram S, et al. Communication skills in psychiatry training. *Australas Psychiatry* 2015; **23**: 429–31.
- 3 Loughland C, Kelly B, Ditton-Phare P, Sandhu H, Vamos M, Outram S, et al. Improving clinician competency in communication about schizophrenia: a pilot educational program for psychiatry trainees. *Acad Psychiatry* 2015; **39**: 160–4.
- 4 Ditton-Phare P, Sandhu H, Kelly B, Kissane D, Loughland C. Pilot evaluation of a communication skills training program for psychiatry residents using standardized patient assessment. *Acad Psychiatry* 2016; **40**: 768–75.

Philippa Ditton-Phare, PhD student, **Brian Kelly**, BM, DPhil, **Carmel L. Loughland**, PhD, School of Medicine & Public Health, Faculty of Health & Medicine, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, Australia. Email: philippa.ditton-phare@uon.edu.au;

doi: 10.1192/bjp.210.6.438

Authors' reply: The pilot study by Ditton-Phare *et al.*¹ which was not published at the time of writing our paper, is a most welcome addition to the field. Their focus on how to communicate about diagnosis and prognosis is particularly helpful, given that there can be a reluctance to disclose a diagnosis of psychosis for fear of causing harm.² As Ditton-Phare *et al.* describe, they evaluated trainees' skills '*in vitro*' using role plays with actors. While assessing trainees' skills interacting with actors (or simulated patients) is a useful tool in training, there are 'qualities of the psychiatrist–patient encounter that may be resistant to simulation'.³ Our study⁴ differed in testing an intervention in the natural clinic setting with patients. Hence, as far as we are aware, this is the first study to enhance communication with patients with psychosis.

- 1 Ditton-Phare P, Sandhu H, Kelly B, Kissane D, Loughland C. Pilot evaluation of a communication skills training program for psychiatry residents using standardized patient assessment. *Acad Psychiatry* 2016; **40**: 768–75.
- 2 Moran GS, Oz G, Karnieli-Miller O. Psychiatrists' challenges in considering disclosure of schizophrenia diagnosis in Israel. *Qual Health Res* 2014; **24**: 1368–80.
- 3 Brenner AM. Uses and limitations of simulated patients in psychiatric education. *Acad Psychiatry* 2009; **33**: 112–9.
- 4 McCabe R, John P, Dooley J, Healey P, Cushing A, Kingdon D, et al. Training to enhance psychiatrist communication with patients with psychosis (TEMPO): cluster randomised controlled trial. *Br J Psychiatry* 2016; **209**: 517–24.

Rose McCabe, PhD, University of Exeter Medical School, Exeter. Email: r.mccabe@exeter.ac.uk

doi: 10.1192/bjp.210.6.438a