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“EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION-” ADULT LIAISON PSYCHIATRY (CONSULTATION-LIAISON): CAN SERVICE DEVELOPMENT FULFIL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?

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Introduction: Liaison Psychiatry is primarily concerned with the detection and treatment of psychiatric disorders within the general hospitals.¹A study² also highlighted the presence of only 45.5 core trainee posts in this speciality nationally.

Aims & objective: To survey the liaison psychiatry service recently set up as a service provision at a psychiatry unit in North Derbyshire.

Methods: We retrospectively reviewed all case notes of patients who had been assessed from January 2007 to June 2009 by the consultation-liaison service.

Results: A total of 136 patients had been assessed since this service began in September 2007. Majority of the patients (72%) were between the ages of 31 to 65 years, while the gender was equally distributed. 51 % were referred from the medical ward and most of them had been referred by core trainee. 95% of the referral was during working hours and 74% of the patients were assessed within 24 hours. Their diagnosis was variable, for e.g. 29% had depression, 19% had substance misuse problems, 8% had psychosis etc. 66% of patients were managed by medication advice, psycho-education and referral to CMHT/GP.

Conclusions: Liaison psychiatry was established for service provision, but it is apparent that it fulfilled both clinical and educational needs, despite the challenges. Adequate experience can be gained with a well supervised service. The overall educational value of designing and implementing a new service as a trainee cannot be overstated; it is something which is difficult to learn in classrooms.