



## miscellany

### **Florence Nightingale Hospitals confronts growing problem of teenage mental illness**

In 1999 20% of suicidal callers to the mental health helpline SANELINE were aged 15–24 years; teenage mental illness is on the increase in our society. Statistics show that throughout the past decade there have been approximately 19 000 suicide attempts by adolescents every year and at least two teenagers a day actually succeed in killing themselves. Although media attention has heightened awareness of the problem, very little has changed in the way these young people are treated. There is a distinct lack of available facilities for the specialist treatment of adolescent mental illness. Florence Nightingale Hospitals aims to help redress the situation, with the opening of its Young Persons Centre. Here, adolescents can benefit from focused specialist care, including an adapted educational programme and group therapy sessions. Emphasis is placed on helping the teenagers and their families understand their illness and teaching them how to cope with it in its early stages, and perhaps avoid getting caught in the 'revolving hospital door'. The Central London unit offers treatment by a multi-disciplinary team consisting of consultant psychiatrists, a clinical psychologist, family counsellor, art psychotherapist, social worker, teacher and senior nurse manager and nursing staff.

For further details contact Zsara Hodgkinson, Marketing Manager, Florence Nightingale Hospitals; tel: 020 7535 7746; e-mail: Zsara.hodgkinson@cmel.bure.se, or Anna Wright, SPARX Communications; tel: 01753 893 000; e-mail: anna@sparx.uk.com.

### **2000 Lilly Schizophrenia Reintegration Awards**

The Westbury Mental Health Initiative was announced as the winner of the 2000 Lilly Schizophrenia Reintegration Awards. The team, comprising a community psychiatric nurse, general practitioner and practice manager, from the Eastleigh surgery, Westbury in Wiltshire, won the highly acclaimed national award in recognition of the development of a comprehensive mental health initiative to improve standards of care for people with schizophrenia. This included streamlining care for both clients and their relatives and carers, improving communications between secondary and primary care services and managing appropriate use of antipsychotic medication. The annual awards were

introduced to recognise and reward outstanding achievement in helping patients with schizophrenia and related disorders overcome barriers in reintegrating into society. The awards are aimed at health care professionals who are based in, or who have strong links with, primary care.

### **Mind – the Vietnam bike ride**

Leading mental health charity Mind is offering the adventurous an amazing opportunity; the chance to take part in a sponsored bike ride through Vietnam in November 2001. This exciting 10-day trip takes participants from the majestic Marble Mountains to the bustling city of Saigon via an amazing backdrop of verdant rainforest and paddy fields. It also offers the rare opportunity to step back in time away from the pressures of modern life and experience the overwhelming friendliness of the Vietnamese people.

In return for the initial fee of £299 and minimum sponsorship level, entrants will receive all accommodation, meals, bike, lots of moral and fund-raising support. You don't have to be super-fit because Mind will provide training advice to ensure everyone is ready for the challenge. Prizes will also be awarded to top fund-raisers.

Sponsorship from just one participant could fund the entire Mind InfoLine for 4 working days, helping 400 people in crisis. Mind provides vital support to the one in four people experiencing mental health problems.

To find out more about the bike ride call 0870 012 9001 or e-mail vietnam@mind.org.uk.

### **Certificate in community mental health care**

The certificate offers comprehensive cover of the core knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by practitioners to deliver effective and safe client-centred services across the broad spectrum of mental health services in the UK.

The qualification is aimed at staff, volunteers, service users and carers who do not have a professional qualification relating to mental health and are involved in the delivery of mental health services in some way. Such services may include residential, day care or drop-in services, advocacy, in-patient and out-patient care, supported housing, supported employment, home and general community support and specialist services such as those for homeless people. The certificate may be taken independently or alongside other vocational training. It may also be used as either a stepping stone

onto or following professional training. There are no prerequisite qualifications, learning or experience for students of the certificate, however City & Guilds Affinity recommends that in order for students to fully benefit from the qualification they should have some current or past practical experience in the mental health field to draw on. They should already have completed their induction period within the workplace or the equivalent.

The assessment strategy for the certificate allows students to gradually build up achievement to the full certificate at their own speed and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has formally accredited the certificate, which means that it is part of the National Qualifications Framework for England and Wales. The awarding body for the certificate will be City & Guilds. For further information visit the website (<http://www.mental-health.org.uk/certificate>).

### **Innovative new website makes connections for those affected by autism**

From 18 October 2000 searching for information about autism on the internet will be much easier owing to a new sophisticated, yet user-friendly, website entitled 'autismconnect' (<http://www.autismconnect.com>). The project is a partnership between the National Autistic Society, the Shirley Foundation and the web developer RMR plc.

The website is a free, non-commercial service that aims to be the first port of call for anyone interested in finding up-to-date information about autism and related autistic spectrum disorders. This includes people with an autistic disorder, their parents, friends, educators and therapists, as well as researchers, legislators and volunteers.

The site will contain details of other websites, events, conferences, support groups, organisations and the latest research from around the world.

### **The Morris Markowe Public Education Prize**

The prize was established in 1989 from funds donated in the memory of the late Dr Morris Markowe, Honorary Fellow and Registrar of the Royal College of Psychiatrists from 1972–1998. An award will be made this year of £400 to the successful entrant.

### **Regulations:**

The Morris Markowe Prize is awarded annually for:



## columns

- (a) an original article on a psychiatric topic of approximately 1000 words, aimed at the general public and suitable for publication in a regional newspaper, lay journal or on the internet; or
- (b) an article on a psychiatric topic of approximately 1000 words, aimed at the general public and published in the past year (between May and April annually) in a regional newspaper, lay journal or on the internet; or
- (c) an article on a psychiatric topic of approximately 1000 words, aimed at the general public and commissioned by the Public Education Committee for publication in a regional newspaper, lay journal or on the internet.

Entries will be judged on their readability, originality and newsworthiness by designated members of the College's Public Education Committee. Entries must be submitted in typescript only, indicating the target publication/audience (e.g. regional newspaper). Entries for the prize must be submitted to the Head of External Affairs at the College by 1 May of each year.

### A request from Professor Stafford Lightman

'Over the past year or so I have been helping set up a postgraduate M.Med programme at the University of Mbarara

in Uganda. This is an extremely interesting medical school as it is set up as a community-based medical school, which is extremely appropriate for the medical problems of this part of the world. One of the areas that has been a great success has been in transcultural psychiatry. There was an extremely good Dutch psychiatrist who, among other things, formed an extremely close association with the traditional healers in the area and also set up some very good training programmes for people dealing with victims of African disasters. This lady has now had to go back to Holland. . . I feel that there is an enormous opportunity for working at Mbarara and I suspect there must be people who would be enthusiastic about the opportunity of going there.'

If there is any psychiatrist who would like to take on this very interesting challenge please contact Professor S. Lightman, University of Bristol, University Research Centre for Neuroendocrinology, Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin Laboratories, Bristol Royal Infirmary, Marlborough Street, Bristol BS2 8HW.

### People's Voice for Health campaign launches The People's Challenge

The UK's leading health care charities are joining forces for the first time to launch

the People's Voice for Health (PV4H) campaign to challenge all health providers to commit to real change and to put patients at the heart of the NHS now.

The PV4H campaign is a direct response to the Government's NHS Plan. It acknowledges that the Government's recent modernisation of the NHS Plan was a step in the right direction and it welcomed the proposed patient involvement at national, health authority and local level. The People's Challenge asks health providers to sign up to three key statements that commit to a comprehensive NHS, available and accessible to all. Importantly, they are also asked to demonstrate their commitment by naming a new patient-centred initiative they will undertake as they move towards a more people orientated service.

PV4H has set up a website (<http://www.pv4h.org.uk>) to enable health organisations and professionals to sign up immediately and to give details of their initiatives. In addition, the campaign is distributing thousands of the The People's Challenge cards across the country for signing and return. The general public is also encouraged to register support on the website, by letter or by calling 020 7813 3645.

## forthcoming events

The teaching unit of the Department of Forensic Psychiatry at the **Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London**, is organising a 1-day course principally aimed at trainee psychiatrists at senior house officer or specialist registrar grades. Entitled **Mental Disorder, Violence and Risk**, the course will take place on 16 January 2001, between 9.45a.m. and 4.15p.m. at the Institute of Psychiatry. The programme will outline the theoretical issues as well as examine the clinical context of this important area. The speakers, who are all experts in the field, include Professor John Gunn, Dr Mike Shooter and Professor Pamela Taylor. For further information about the course please contact Mrs Carol Double, Department of Forensic Psychiatry, Institute of Psychiatry, De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8AF; tel: 020 7848 0122; fax: 020 7848 0754; e-mail: [c.double@iop.kcl.ac.uk](mailto:c.double@iop.kcl.ac.uk).

**Mole conferences** would like to announce the following two conferences:

**Personality Disorders: Mad, Bad or just Misunderstood.** A 1-day conference to be held at Regents College on 15

March 2001, convened by Dr Gwen Adshead, Honorary Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Forensic Psychiatry at Broadmoor Hospital and the Traumatic Stress Clinic.

The personality disorder diagnosis can give rise to problems and debate; both professional and political. The conference will look at the realities of working with patients given this diagnosis. Speakers with extensive experience in the field will review assessment, research and treatment issues. The conference will also look at the impact on staff working with potentially demanding groups. Whatever the Government plans for this group, mental health services will be involved at different levels. The conference will be of interest to different practitioners of mental health care.

**Dual Diagnosis** is a 1-day conference to be held at the Institute of Physics on 30 March 2001, convened by Dr Ken Chęcinski, Senior Lecturer in Addictive Behaviour at St George's Hospital Medical School.

For further information concerning either conference contact Mole Conferences, 26 Church Road, Portslade,

Brighton BN41 1LA; tel: 01273 242 634; fax: 01273 235 095; e-mail: [enquiries@mole-conferences.com](mailto:enquiries@mole-conferences.com).

**The 9th International Congress on Dermatology and Psychiatry, 'Pointing the Way'**, will be held on 22-24 March 2001. The Congress will focus on the collaborative team approach of dermatologists, psychiatrists and psychologists in recognising and helping patients who have skin disorders. The Congress will be held in the Hotel Princesa Sofia, Plaza Pio IX, 4 08028 Barcelona, Spain. The conference will be presented both in English and Spanish. For further information please contact Mrs Elena Lagalante, Department of Dermatology, Hospital Clinic, Villarroel 170, 08036 Barcelona, Spain; tel: +34 932275438; fax: +34 934177335; e-mail: [elagalante@compuserve.com](mailto:elagalante@compuserve.com).

**The 9th Manchester course in liaison psychiatry** will be held 4-8 June 2001. This is an intensive week-long course in liaison psychiatry. It is most suitable for newly appointed consultants and specialist registrars. Emphasis is placed upon small group teaching and workshops.