

P01-194 - **WHY PATIENTS DO NOT ATTEND - UNDERSTANDING THE REASONS FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT A CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY CLINIC**

A.M. Doherty¹, M.R. McCarthy²

¹*Department of Adult Psychiatry, University College Dublin / Mater Misericordiae University Hospital,*

²*Ballyfermot Child & Family Centre, Dublin, Ireland*

Objectives: To examine the reasons for non attendance at clinic appointments, and to identify any ways in which these rates might be reduced.

Methods: We examined the records of those patients who, having consented to a referral to a child and adolescent psychiatry service, then either failed to attend any appointments, or who ceased to attend after having attended one or more appointments, but without being discharged, over an 18-month period. The parents of these children were contacted by telephone and a semi-structured interview was conducted to ascertain the reason in each case for defaulting on the appointment.

Results: The reasons given by the parents of the patients for missing appointments included their opinion that the referral was unnecessary (31.8%), resolution of the problem which led to the referral (22.7%), the child refusing to attend (22.7%) and problems with clinicians (9%). In the majority of cases where the parent did not consider the referral necessary, the referral had been made by the child's school (71%), with the parent reporting that they had felt pressurised into consenting to the referral.

Conclusion: The high levels of non-attendance at clinics have serious implications, especially if it means that those in need of services are not accessing them. The factors which we have identified in this study are chiefly patient rather than service factors, which are likely to be related to socio-economic factors.

Keywords: Psychiatry, Mental Health, Non-attendance rate, Outpatients, Child, Ireland.