

IASSID European Regional Congress

Athens 17-20 July 2018

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to FPSA for supporting me to attend this conference. I attended the 5th European Regional Congress for the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSID) held in Athens, Greece. I presented my research titled: "CAMHS LD Adherence to STOMP Guidelines." This was a great opportunity to share the work we have been doing in the CAMHS LD service in Cwm Taf UHB, South Wales.

I attended several presentations and workshops throughout the conference. The theme of the conference was inclusivity and belonging. The keynote speakers were inspiring. Prof G. van Hove from Ghent University spoke about studies in intellectual disability and if group homes are currently providing young people with full inclusion into society. Prof Embregts from Tilburg University spoke about people with intellectual disability developing self-determination and optimal wellbeing. This included the development of autonomy, relatedness (caring for and being cared for) and competence. Prof Embregts was joined by a young lady with Downs Syndrome and intellectual disability speaking about her full role in society, including helping her family and friends develop technology skills. For me, these talks framed the bigger picture on how well our patients are currently able to meet their potential and the challenges they face.

During the conference I attended a workshop on discontinuing antipsychotics prescribed for challenging behaviour. This is a topic related to my own field of interest and presented work. Recent research in the Netherlands has found that the decision to consider discontinuation normally came down to the physicians, not the family or staff. Therefore, medications were not discontinued if physicians lacked confidence and did not believe it would have a significant impact on the patient's quality of life. Successful discontinuations were more likely if ABC charts were used rather than physician judgement. This was an interesting insight for me and made me consider our own practice. ABC charts are normally used during the assessment phase but are often not still in place when a medication is being discontinued. I will review this practice with the Cwm Taf CAMHS LD team.

I also attended several workshops on non-pharmacological treatments for mental health disorders. Adolescents and people with intellectual disability are more prone to side effects from medication so this felt like an important avenue to explore. EMDR has been found to be an effective treatment for this patient group and may be more suitable than trauma focused CBT, given its need for verbal communication. Initial research into bright light therapy for depression was also presented. These initial results show it is an effective treatment and I will aim to keep myself up to date in this area as more studies are expected.

The conference also afforded me the opportunity to network with other professionals working in similar fields internationally. I met several professionals working at the Centre for Intellectual Disability and Mental Health in the Netherlands. They are developing a tool to help ensure antipsychotics are being appropriately prescribed to patients with intellectual disability. It highlights drug interactions and alternatives. It will be interesting to see the outcome data for this tool and consider if similar could be implemented here.

Following this conference, I feel motivated to explore our current local practices involving pharmacological treatment of mental health disorders in CAMHS LD. I have already implemented a new monitoring form for our patients on antipsychotics and hope to analyse its effectiveness soon.

Thank you again for your support.

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