Summary

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Clinical Academic Group (CAG) aims to offer comprehensive care for children and young people aged 0-18 presenting with mental disorders. Evidence-based assessments and interventions are provided by Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists and multi-disciplinary teams.

Examples of excellence

Regional specialist commissioning of acute services

In the context of the work of Maudsley National Centre for Mental Health, we have shown that the focus on children with autism has allowed additional mental health interventions including to improve processing, focusing and quality of life. The need for more effective medication was seen in a previous study, which showed that young people with autism were at greater risk of self-harm and suicide. We have carried out a systematic review of medication and other interventions for children with autism, and shown that early intervention is a key factor in reducing the risk of subsequent problems.

Innovative model for teaching medical students

The CAG has developed an innovative model for teaching medical students. Child psychiatry is a vital component of the undergraduate curriculum and it is essential that medical students appreciate the importance of this specialty. We have developed a range of innovative teaching methods, including case-based learning, role-play scenarios, and interactive workshops, to help students understand the complexities of child psychiatry and develop the skills needed to work with children and young people.

Student feedback is positive and other areas of psychiatry are now considering adopting the model that has been developed by child psychiatry.

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Plans and priorities for the next five years

Research will:
- extend the origins of child mental disorder by studying infants;
- implement new technologies, such as near-infrared spectroscopy, eye-tracking, and imaging techniques;
- extend the data collection on Case Register Interactive Search to include more systematic phenotyping and treatment as usual outcomes, as well as linkage to population databases to provide the world’s largest clinical child mental health database;
- develop a strategy for routine biomarker collection that will aid deep phenotyping.

Education and training will focus on:
- implementation of the extended Improving Access to Psychological Therapies to provide core training at a national level;
- development of distance learning strategy that considers the full range of training opportunities and programmes.

Clinical developments will include:
- developing, trialling and evaluating more effective and efficient modalities of assessment and treatment in economically challenging times;
- extending the close relationship between research and clinical practice to increase the number of patients participating in research, embed research on service user attitudes and priorities into routine clinical work, and extend the routine systematic data;
- developing relationships within the new commissioning arrangements that foster our strategy, including evidence-based assessments and interventions, comprehensive services for children and young people with mental disorders, and regional commissioning of specialist services.

We plan to maintain an integrated approach to leadership that will deliver these ambitions.

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Meeting the tripartite mission

Education and training

The CAG has a key role to play in the training and development of child and adolescent psychiatrists. We have developed a range of innovative teaching methods, including case-based learning, role-play scenarios, and interactive workshops, to help students understand the complexities of child psychiatry and develop the skills needed to work with children and young people.

Research

We are committed to delivering an evidence-based approach to the treatment of mental health problems in children and young people. We have carried out a range of innovative research projects, including the development of new diagnostic and treatment modalities. These projects have been funded by colleagues in child health, and shared research projects to existing disorders, resulting in a number of new publications and datasets.

Commissioning

We have one of the five national contracts for specialist autism clinical and research services. This contract allows us to offer comprehensive care for children and young people with autism, including medication and other interventions for reducing the risk of subsequent problems.

CAG mission

We are committed to delivering an evidence-based approach to the treatment of mental health problems in children and young people. We have carried out a range of innovative research projects, including the development of new diagnostic and treatment modalities. These projects have been funded by colleagues in child health, and shared research projects to existing disorders, resulting in a number of new publications and datasets.

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