PRODIGY: Prevention and treatment of long term social disability amongst young people with emerging severe mental illness: A randomised controlled trial

Record Status
This is a bibliographic record of an ongoing health technology assessment being undertaken by a member of INAHTA. Links to the published report and any other relevant documentation will be added when available.

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Authors' objectives
It is now known that the most serious mental health problems begin in the teenage and young adulthood. Some young people who experience mental health problems sometimes find it hard to carry on living the life they want to live; for example, having problems going to work or college, or taking part in social activities. These social and mental health problems are often very distressing for young people and their families at the time. Experiencing these problems also increases the risk of long-term social and mental health problems. Despite these potential immediate and long-term problems, these young people and their families often do not often access the treatment they need from mental health services. There is a major gap in identifying mental health problems of young people and providing appropriate and effective support to help with social recovery. ‘Social recovery’ is a term used to describe when someone is living the life they want despite having experienced mental health problems. We think that people might make a better social recovery if they work with a therapist using a technique called Social Recovery Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (SRCBT). This is a talking therapy which helps young people to identify their interests and goals and what might be making it more difficult for them to do the kinds of activities they value. The therapist also helps the young person to overcome these barriers and feel less worried about starting new activities or engaging again in things they used to enjoy. Research we have already done suggests that SRCBT helps with meaningful activity and mental health for people with psychosis (for example, hear voices and feeling threatened by others). This project will test how helpful it is to provide this type of therapy to socially withdrawn young people at earlier stages of mental health problems. We have conducted a successful pilot in which 100 young people participated. We are going to recruit another 170 young people in Sussex, East Anglia and Manchester with severe and complex mental health problems and who have associated social disability (defined as 30 hours a week or less spent participating in structured activity). To help us find out how beneficial SRCBT is, we need to compare it to the care and support young people currently get. In order to do this, we will randomly put young people who take part into two groups: one group will receive the SRCBT and the other group will not. The SRCBT lasts for 9 months. Young people complete assessments at the beginning of the study, after 9 months, after 15 months and after 24 months. These assessments help us to understand whether the SRCBT seems to be helpful for young people’s social recovery and mental health. We have also been asking young people to tell us their perspectives about SRCBT and the experience of taking part in the project. The results of this research study will inform future guidance for patient care. The study will also provide important evidence for interventions aimed at preventing mental health problems.

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