Improving the mental health of children and young people with long term conditions: linked evidence syntheses

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.

Citation
Improving the mental health of children and young people with long term conditions: linked evidence syntheses. Health Technology Assessment

Authors’ objectives
Background to the research: Many children and young people with a long term physical health condition (LTC) will also experience feelings of depression and anxiety as well as displaying disruptive behaviour. These difficulties may not only affect the young person’s development and quality of life but can also have a negative impact on the treatment and management of the LTC. Aims of the research: We aim to i) assess how well treatments aimed at improving the mental health of children and young people with LTCs work, ii) assess whether treatments are good value for money and iii) explore the factors that might help or prevent the treatments from working. Design and methods used: The project will have three parts. 1) We will undertake two systematic reviews. A systematic review is a critical assessment of all the research studies on a topic. We will carefully search for all the available studies to combine their findings in order to try and find out which treatments work better at reducing symptoms of psychological distress in children and young people with LTCs and which provide the best value for money. We will also look for research papers that describe the experience of having an LTC and poor mental health among children and young people receiving interventions to treat poor mental health, their parents and families, as these are likely to provide pointers to things that may help or hinder mental health treatments for this group. 2) We will bring together the findings from the two reviews to map out possible links between the treatments and their effects on mental health, gaps in the evidence and factors that seem to enhance or limit the success of interventions. And 3) we will discuss the findings with children and young people who have LTCs and their families, and the practitioners who work with them to ensure that they make sense. We will do this via a mixture of face to face discussion with individuals and groups and also email to achieve a widespread distribution of different views and experiences. We hope that by bringing together all the results in a single piece of work we will be able to make a helpful contribution to knowledge in this area. Patient and public involvement: We will convene a group of between 5 and 8 children and young people with LTCs and symptoms of mental ill health (C&YP Research Advisory Group). Involvement will focus on the three key stages of an evidence synthesis project at which involvement is most valuable, i) once funding is in place, but while the protocol is still being finalised, to help refine review questions, identify sources of grey literature and specify search terms, ii) to consider the transferability of preliminary results and iii) during the preparation of project outputs. Dissemination: It is important that the findings are readily available to the people for whom they are relevant. This will include mental and physical health clinicians, commissioners of health services, other researchers and children and young people and their families. Different methods of dissemination will be necessary for different audiences. We will prepare papers for publication in respected journals and will present the findings at appropriate scientific conferences. We also plan to co-create targeted plain language summaries and video clips which we will make available to patient groups and charities, as well as to practitioners and clinicians.

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