

and fear-based concerns of policy makers and the media who want us to 'move into the community', while simultaneously guaranteeing that adverse outcomes will not occur.

- 1 Forbes NF, Cash HT, Lawrie SM. Intensive home treatment, admission rates and use of mental health legislation. *Psychiatrist* 2010; **34**: 522–4.
- 2 Middleton H, Glover G, Onyett S, Linde K. Crisis resolution/home treatment teams, gate-keeping and the role of the consultant psychiatrist. *Psychiatr Bull* 2008; **32**: 378–9.
- 3 Care Quality Commission. *Monitoring the Use of the Mental Health Act in 2009–10*. Care Quality Commission, 2010.

Philip McGarry and **Ashling O'Hare** are consultant psychiatrists in home treatment and **Ciaran McNally** is specialty trainee (ST6), Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast, UK, email: McGarry.philipj@belfasttrust.hscni.net

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The increase in compulsory treatment following introduction of a crisis resolution service as observed by Forbes *et al*¹ was to be entirely expected as other studies have mentioned this association before.^{2,3} However, I am a bit puzzled about the explanation the authors provided regarding this finding – the team probably having a low threshold for accepting risk and being more likely to consider the use of the Mental Health Act. I certainly do not believe this to be an explanation that would ring true with other crisis teams, for I am under the impression that the staff in most crisis teams have a very high threshold for admitting someone; this is, I think, to do with their role of gatekeeping admissions (and controlling the beds).

The other important aspect that needs to be considered here relates to the fact that the team in the study do not have control over admissions under the Mental Health Act outside working hours, which are between 8 am and 12 pm. It would be useful to see the numbers of people admitted under the Act out of hours, who were being assessed by other professionals undertaking their own risk assessments. It should also be remembered that many patients assessed and admitted under the Mental Health Act during working hours are not always assessed by the crisis team; community mental health teams undertake their own Mental Health Act assessments.

Finally, let us consider the staffing levels within the crisis team: one part-time staff grade psychiatrist but no dedicated consultant. This in itself may explain the fact that the team has to rely heavily upon others to undertake assessments. Once professionals outside the crisis team make a decision to detain someone there is nothing that the crisis team can do about it; they simply have to find a bed for the detained person.

- 1 Forbes NF, Cash HT, Lawrie SM. Intensive home treatment, admission rates and use of mental health legislation. *Psychiatrist* 2010; **34**: 522–4.
- 2 Keown P, Tacchi MJ, Niemiec S, Hughes J. Changes to mental healthcare for working age adults: impact of a crisis team and an assertive outreach team. *Psychiatr Bull* 2007; **31**: 288–92.
- 3 Tyrer P, Gordon F, Nourmand S, Lawrence M, Curran C, Southgate D, et al. Controlled comparison of two crisis resolution and home treatment teams. *Psychiatrist* 2010; **34**: 50–4.

Mohinder Kapoor is specialty registrar (ST5) in old age psychiatry, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Becksid Court, 286 Bradford Road, Batley WF17 5PW, UK, email: moe.kapoor@nhs.net

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Age discrimination across the lifespan

Many of Anderson's observations¹ on unjustified age discrimination at the later stages of the lifespan apply also to children and adolescents with mental health problems. They receive a disproportionately low level of funding, are excluded from much research, are subject to often inappropriate extrapolation of treatment guidelines for adults, and until recently have been excluded from formal mental health strategic thinking (both the *National Service Framework*² and *New Horizons*³ specifically excluded child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) from their remits).

Anderson states that the Royal College of Psychiatrists' position statement on age discrimination in mental health⁴ incorporated contributions from all of its constituent faculties and sections. It is unclear to me where the contribution from the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Faculty is to be found. In this regard, the government's new mental health strategy⁵ is to be welcomed as it adopts an all-age approach to mental health by explicitly including CAMHS within it. Strategies aimed at addressing age discrimination need to consider the whole of the lifespan if they are not unwittingly to recreate it.

- 1 Anderson D. Age discrimination in mental health services needs to be understood. *Psychiatrist* 2011; **35**: 1–4.
- 2 Department of Health. *National Service Framework for Mental Health: Modern Standards and Service Models*. Department of Health, 1999.
- 3 Department of Health. *New Horizons: A Shared Vision for Mental Health*. Department of Health, 2009.
- 4 Royal College of Psychiatrists. *Age Discrimination in Mental Health Services: Making Equality a Reality (Position Statement PS2/2009)*. Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2009.
- 5 Department of Health. *No Health without Mental Health: A Cross-Government Mental Health Outcomes Strategy for People of All Ages*. Department of Health, 2011.

Andrew F. Clark, consultant in adolescent psychiatry, Greater Manchester West Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Manchester, UK, email: andrew.clark@gmw.nhs.uk

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No physical health, only mental health

In the canteen of our psychiatric hospital I found myself standing behind an in-patient who had been escorted by a nurse from the ward. I was rather concerned to witness the patient request, and be sold, three hot dinners, three sandwiches, four packets of crisps and four bottles of an energy drink. The nurse escorting the patient confirmed that all the food was indeed for the patient himself and that he did this every day, which was also confirmed by the patient's obesity. I expressed my concern that the patient was putting his health at risk by being allowed to buy and eat so much food in the hospital. The reply given by the nurse was that the treatment team were all aware of the situation but were of the opinion that 'Well, what can we do, the patient has rights to eat what he wants, who are we to stop him?' Those responsible for the care and treatment of the patient (detained under the Mental Health Act) were aware of his extreme overeating but they were merely observing such behaviour, believing themselves to be attending to his mental health needs in isolation, even to the extent of escorting the patient on his bingeing trips.