

P02-194

PERCEPTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ABOUT ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

V. Agyapong¹, M. Migone², B. Marckey²

¹Psychiatry, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin, ²Child and Family Centre, Castleknock, Ireland

Objectives: To assess the knowledge and perception of primary school teachers about Asperger's Syndrome (AS).

Methods: Structured questionnaires about AS were posted to 90 primary school principals for them to distribute to teachers in their schools.

Results: 343 completed questionnaires were returned by 54 principals giving a response rate of 60%. Of these, 49% of the teachers reported that recognition and management of emotional and behavioural disorders was covered in their undergraduate training whilst 58% said they had ever taught a child with AS. 90% said intense absorption in certain subjects was a feature of AS, 84% recognised lack of empathy and poor social interaction whilst 58% , 64% and 69.7% respectively recognised pedantic repetitive speech, clumsy or ill-coordinated movements or odd postures and poor non-verbal communication as features of AS. 71% said children with Asperger's Syndrome should be taught in mainstream classes. However, only 10.5% of the teachers believed that main stream schools in Ireland are adequately resourced to cater for children with AS. 87.2% said they saw the need for a closer collaboration between schools and psychiatric services in the management of children with AS whilst 96.2% said they would like to receive in-service training on the management of children with AS.

Conclusion: Most primary school teachers recognise the features of AS and want schools to have greater collaboration with psychiatric services regarding management of AS. An in-service training for teachers on the management of AS might be of benefit to children with AS.