The negative evaluation of the future is one of the factor of the Cognitive Triad of Depression as seen from the result. The results support the objective that hopelessness is common factor on depression and suicide.

AN INVESTIGATION OF 'EARLY' PSYCHIATRIC READMISSIONS

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The study investigated readmissions to an acute psychiatric inpatient unit within three months of discharge. First, it aimed to establish clinical and demographic risk factors associated with these early readmissions. Second, it aimed to explore and compare the views of readmitted patients and members of their clinical team concerning the cause and possible prevention of these readmissions.

All discharges within a specified period were classified as index discharges. Patients readmitted within three months of this index discharge were compared to a selection of patients who were not readmitted. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted, both with readmitted patients and with senior members of their clinical team. Interviews focused on perceived causes of the readmission and on whether or not the readmission could have been avoided.

A statistical comparison between the readmission and non-readmission patient groups found the following factors to be significantly associated with early readmission: number of previous psychiatric admissions, younger age at first psychiatric admission, and discharge against medical advice (AMA) on the patients' previous hospital admission. Of those discharged AMA, a substantial 83% were readmitted within three months. Furthermore, patients discharged AMA were given significantly fewer aftercare referrals than patients discharged with medical approval.

Interviews indicated that staff and patients held broadly similar opinions about the cause of readmissions. The majority of patients (63%) and staff (71%) considered the nature of the patient's illness to be the primary cause of the readmission. However, significantly more patients than staff thought the readmission could have been avoided, usually through increased support services arranged on the patients' previous discharge.

To conclude: Patients who have a number of previous admissions, who were first admitted to a psychiatric hospital at a young age, and who were discharged against medical advice on their previous admission are at increased risk for 'early' psychiatric readmission. Given the complexity of circumstances surrounding premature patient discharge, hospitals may consider offering a range of alternatives (eg. a few days leave) to patients who wish to discharge themselves. The study also confirms the need to ensure adequate follow up support for patients who are discharged against medical advice.

ORIGINAL TECHNIQUE OF DEPRESSION SCALING

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The group of thalamic neurons is the part of afferent optic tract and the only one that intermediates color sensitivity. Therefore, the level of color sensitivity threshold at the same moment reflects emotional state of patient. 180 patients with affective disorders were examined. Registration of some parts of light spectrum sensitivity was used. The specific color sensitivity profiles of some basic affects were obtained, the original method of affect evaluation was developed. The simple technical solution is found for clinical practice. The patients were offered to contrast the two-color picture. Illusive distortion levels were obtained. The high precision, validity and reliability of

this method was proved in comparison with Hamilton and Beck scales. The use of this technique for other affects estimation is studying. The proposed method is examining in patients with anxiety disorders.

MONOAMINE PRECURSORS, TRANSMITTERS AND METABOLITES IN CEREBROSPINAL FLUID: A STUDY IN HEALTHY MALE SUBJECTS

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Objectives: To elucidate methodological aspects of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) investigations of precursors, monoamine transmitters and their metabolites.

Methods: 14 healthy male subjects were lumbar-punctured in the sitting position at the L4–5 level following a strictly standardised procedure. 2 x 6 ml of CSF was drawn with a 0.70 x 75 mm needle.

Results: The transmitter metabolites 5-HIAA and HVA (but not HMPG) had concentration gradients. We also found pronounced gradients for the precursors tryptophan and tyrosine, as well as for serotonin, dopamine and the dopamine metabolite DOPAC. Dopamine and atmospheric pressure showed a positive intercorrelation. Age correlated curvilinearly with tryptophan. In contrast, age showed a negatively directed linear correlation with serotonin. Serotonin and its metabolite, 5-HIAA, showed no intercorrelation.

Conclusions: Our results suggest an age-dependent activity of tryptophan hydroxylase. The presence of gradients for serotonin, dopamine and DOPAC has to be taken into account. The absence of correlation between serotonin and 5-HIAA is notable.

A DELPHI METHOD APPROACH TO DESCRIBING MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE

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Descriptions of UK community mental health practice are usually confined to generalised macro-level programme descriptions. These encompass a broad range of practice and are of little use in describing and monitoring service delivery.

Aim: This study examined whether a Delphi process could be adapted to identify a set of clinician-generated categories with which to classify the common clinical interventions used with severely mentally ill clients in the community.

Method: A three round 'conventional Delphi' method was used with practising clinicians as experts. Results from the Delphi process were used in a final discussion group for deciding on the categories. A check for clinical adequacy was performed.

Results: The spread of responses to the third Delphi round (analysed by semi-interquartile range) indicated strong consensus. Consensus was present in 37 of the 38 categories (97.4%) and there was a strong consensus in 34 categories (89.5%). A set of ten comprehensive and mutually exclusive categories divided into a total of 44 sub-categories was produced in the discussion group.

Conclusion: The Delphi based methodology produced a meaningful set of categories with which to describe mental health care practice. Combined with quantitative techniques, they have great