

***IRISH CHILD PSYCHIATRIC
RESEARCH: SUMMARY***

(1) ***Preschool and Primary School***

- (a) Preschool behaviour problems 17% (215, 15, 16), sleep problems: 25% of boys and 33% of girls (236).
- (b) Primary school children behavioural problems 20% for boys and 11% of girls (N = 2029). There is a greater behavioural problem in children in disadvantaged schools (5, 37, 45, 80, 89, 171, 170, 169, 176, 187, 188, 192, 198, 236, 255, 256, 259, 271, 301, 311, 312, 313, 335, 346, 348).
- (c) Depression study in a primary school showed that 7% of the children showed evidence of depressive disorder (5). Follow-up study of depressed children in a clinic showed that 50% were still depressed 5 years later (250, 251, 172, 192, 80).
- (d) Anxiety in a urban disadvantaged school 3.5% of the children showed evidence of anxiety (15, 16).
- (e) In a study of social difficulties in a normal school 13% had difficulties with peers, 17% had difficulties with adults and 11% had general social difficulties (348).
- (f) Fire setting: 19% of children attending a Child Psychiatric Outpatients showed evidence of fire setting (180).
- (g) Children's fears: 40% of children attending a Child Psychiatric Outpatients showed evidence of excessive fears (346).
- (h) In a 2000 children study 4% of the males and 1% of females were bullied (173, 234).
- (i) There was no increase in blood lead in children attending a Child Psychiatric Outpatients (191).
- (j) Motivation: Children in an urban primary school showed high intrinsic motivation. Behaviourally disturbed children showed higher levels of independent judgement as against dependence on teacher's judgement (334).
- (k) Miserable feelings: In a study of 2026 ten year olds 2% of the males and 3% of the females were miserable (234).

(2) ***Adolescents***

- (a) Female adolescents: 15% showed evidence of psychological stress in an inner city school with 11% often crying; 11% often having stomach aches; 6% often using drugs or alcohol; 6% often wishing they were the opposite sex; and 7% often having suicidal thoughts (350).
 - (b) Male adolescents: Males had lower scoring on the General Health Questionnaire and had less suicidal ideation than boys (Another study found 7% of female adolescents to be depressed) (168, 167, 173, 165).
 - (c) Abnormal eating habits: Female. Among 16 year old females in a normal school 11% admitted to dieting; 7% to exercising strenuously to burn off calories; 11% of avoiding foods with high carbohydrate content; 15% described eating binges with feelings of loss of control; 4% used laxatives; and 17% felt that food controlled their lives, while 18% admitted to feeling anxious in relation to eating (168).
 - (d) Body shape and abnormal eating attitudes in male adolescents: 1% of boys showed evidence of abnormal eating attitudes; 3% showed abnormal concern about being fat on the Body Shape Questionnaire (206).
 - (e) Attitude to authority: 84% of Irish adolescents expressed pro-authority feelings. There was also a negative correlation between level of psychological distress and positive attitude towards parents (252).
 - (f) Adolescents menarche: The average age of onset of menarche in 836 Irish school girls was 12.5 ± 0.06 (189).
 - (g) Delinquency: A follow-up study of delinquent behaviour showed that 20% had drug problems and there was a 92% recidivist rate (237).
 - (h) Drug use in young Irish adolescents: In a study of five cities, Dublin, Bremen, Groningen, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Rome there was higher drug availability in Dublin than any of the other cities (8, 9, 10, 11, 261, 262, 263).
- (3) ***Physical Health, Childhood, Adolescents, Paediatric Hospitals***
- (a) Considerable psychopathology was found in children and parents attending Paediatric Outpatients (52).
 - (b) Adolescent health In a study of adolescents in a normal school 1% rated their health as poor; 25% drink alcohol at least once weekly, and 29% visited their G.P. in the previous three months; 61% had taken medicine

the previous four weeks; 16% of the boys and 3% of the girls had tried glue sniffing (39). Diabetic children who had good control of their diabetes were less stressed (215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 258).

- (c) 82% of parents were satisfied with the service they received in the Paediatric Outpatients (159).
- (d) In relation to gastroenteritis there was a significant excess of Hospital referrals for gastroenteritis by General Practitioners with prior Hospital training in an Infectious Disease Hospital. 25% of General Practitioners were still using antidiarrhoeals and antienetics in the treatment of gastroenteritis despite the general principal of fluids only for gastroenteritis. In a study of Home or Hospital Care for childhood gastroenteritis it was found that being either a young child, a child of a lone parent or a child of an anxious mother were factors which were equally likely and more likely than being moderately sick to result in referral to Hospital. Only half of the Irish Doctors interviewed believed that hospitalisation of children had negative psychological effects (293, 294, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300).
- (e) Immunisation: In a study of children who had gastroenteritis and were treated in Hospital or at Home it was found that 53% of home care children had measles immunisation which is similar to national levels at the time while only 22% of the Hospital care children had measles immunisation at the time (295).

(4) *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*

- (a) Approximately 2% of children in a study in a community were found to have ADHD. A number of Dopamine polymorphisms have been found to be important in ADHD (2, 236, 12, 121, 122, 132, 135, 137, 144, 138, 163, 202, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 229, 234, 238, 239, 240, 241, 265, 266, 267, 274, 280, 335).

(5) *Autism*

- (a) A study of the prevalence of childhood autism found a rate of 4.3 children with autism per 10,000 of the population in the age range 8 – 10 year olds in the former Eastern Health Board. There was considerable family burden in relation to autism, genetic factors were found to be clearly important (14, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 40, 41, 102, 107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 118, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132,

133, 134, 140, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 149, 151, 152, 161, 194, 193, 195, 196, 197, 260, 269, 277).

(6) *Psychopathological Aspects of Family Life*

- (a) Mothers in Malaysia had significantly lower rates of depressive and anxiety symptoms when compared to Irish mothers (153).
- (b) Mothers of children hospitalised with gastroenteritis had significantly higher levels of psychological distress than mothers who looked after their children at home (299). There was no statistical association between maternal antenatal depression and child behaviour problems but there was a six times increased risk of behaviour problems in the child if mother was currently depressed. A study of mothers postnatally showed that 38% showed evidence of depression (304, 182).
- (c) In a General Practice Study of 70 children there was a significant relationship between maternal depressive symptoms and behavioural deviance in the children (37).
- (d) In a study of mothers of 50 consecutive attenders at a Child Psychiatric Outpatients 35 out of the 50 showed formal psychiatric disorder (301).
- (e) In a study of preschool children there was a significant relationship between depressive symptoms in mothers and behavioural deviance in children (170).
- (f) When a consecutive sample of mothers with children attending the Child Psychiatric Outpatients were compared with a comparison group of mothers of children attending a General Practice it was evident that there was significantly higher levels of hopelessness found in the mothers attending the Child Psychiatric Outpatients (18).
- (g) 72% of children of psychiatric inpatient mothers were found to have social competence problems (330).
- (h) In many of the studies there was a significant relationship between marital disharmony and behavioural deviance in children (255, 301).
- (i) A study of the Family System Test found it to be a poor predictor of clinical status (242).
- (j) Unfair, harsh discipline by parents was predictive of later development of depression (328).

- (k) In a study of the lifetime prevalence of depressive disorder the total number of relatives involved was 1 for 1.7 patients (351).
- (l) A study of parental rearing practices of depressed patients showed that they were more rejecting, more over protective, and more favouring of the subject than a comparison group (328).
- (m) In a study of lone parenthood: Married versus unmarried mothers found that 60% of the married mothers and 18% of the single mothers wished to conceive at the time they became pregnant. 34% of the male partners of the lone parents did not want to know about the pregnancy. The group of lone parents living alone were under considerable stress with three quarters of them having major financial problems as opposed to 19% of those living with their parents (290).
- (n) In a study of mothers attending a Child Psychiatric Outpatients it was found that 17% of the mothers were problem drinkers and 13% were taking Benzodiazepines daily (333).
- (o) Considerable psychosocial stress was found in parents of children who had a child who suffered Sudden Infant Death (19, 20).

(7) ***Speech and Language Problems***

- (a) In a study of 50 consecutive outpatient attenders it was found (310) that 10% of the sample showed a mild phonological disorder and 5% a moderate phonological disorder. 42% showed a mild language disorder and 5% showed a moderate language disorder. 10% showed voice disorders. 5% showed a mild stammer and 5% showed a severe stammer. There was also a high rate of behaviour problems among children with language delay. Of the 22 children with language delay 59% had behaviour problems compared to 14% in the general population. Clearly Speech and Language problems should be given greater attention in routine child psychiatric assessments.

(8) ***Psychopharmacology***

- (a) 90% of Irish Child Psychiatrists prescribed psychotropic drugs (303).
- (b) The prevalence of use of medication was lowest at 8% in Denmark (341).

- (c) Psychostimulants and other medications which are off label like Clonidine are used in the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (101, 121, 122, 137, 138, 141, 303).
- (d) Serotonin reuptake inhibitors like Sertraline – Fluoxetine are often used in Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (155).

(9) ***Suicidal Thoughts and Suicidal Behaviour***

- (a) In a normal primary school 15% of a sample of boys thought that life was not worth living most of the time and 18% thought that life was not worth living sometimes.
- (b) In a study of a Child Psychiatric Outpatients 60% of a sample of children who had thoughts of killing themselves knew someone who had attempted suicide (203).
- (c) In a study of suicide victims in Dublin over a year it was found that 70% were male, 35% had previously attempted suicide, and 53% saw a Doctor in the previous month. 44% experienced hopeless feelings. The Central Statistics Office at the time the study was done underestimated the suicide rate by 20% (291).
- (d) An eight year follow-up of attempted suicide found that 2 out of the 26 had died and 19% had further suicide attempts (28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34).
- (e) A community study of parasuicide found that almost all had attended casualty (331, 332).
- (f) There was a high overprotection score rate among parents of children who attempted suicide. There were considerable rates of suicidal ideation in children in a normal school (340, 339, 338, 337, 336, 43, 44, 349).

(10) ***Personality Disorder***

- (a) A study of the personalities of 50 Child Guidance Clinic attenders found that 5 could be given a diagnosis of Personality Disorder (345).

(11) ***Audit in Child Psychiatry***

- (a) Studies of the outcome of interventions in Child Psychiatry Outpatients have found that there was good outcome at three months follow-up but that all evidence of improvement had disappeared at one year follow-up.
 - (b) Another study looking at the effective booster sessions found that families who had booster sessions had better long-term outcomes.
 - (c) Child Psychiatry will need to approach child psychiatric problems from a chronic care and treatment model as many are either persistent or recurrent as is the case with many problems in medicine generally.
 - (d) 77% of mothers express satisfaction at the service provided by the Child and Family Centre.
 - (e) 30% of children expressed anxiety and apprehension about a visit to a Child and Family Centre / Child Psychiatric Outpatients (175, 166, 306, 307).
- (12) ***Burn Out in Child Psychiatric Personnel***
- (a) Personnel working Residential Child Psychiatry were more likely to be emotionally exhausted than personnel working in Outpatient Child Psychiatry (309).
- (13) ***Life Events and Child Psychiatry***
- (a) There were increased numbers of life events in children referred to Child Psychiatry. Failure of a class in school and increased number of arguments between parents were associated with an increase likelihood of referral (45).
- (14) ***Prosocial Behaviour and Behaviour Problems***
- (a) High trait anxiety was accompanied by lower prosocial behaviour scores and higher behavioural deviance ratings (311).
- (15) ***Family Burden of a Child with Special Needs***

- (a) Parents who had a child with special needs felt more incompetent, felt lack of attachment, were more restricted in their parental role, were more socially isolated, more depressed, and had more marital stress (158).

(16) ***Self Esteem and Psychiatric Problems in Children***

- (a) School self-esteem was not reduced in children attending a day special school. Parental self-esteem and locus of control have an impact on children's self esteem scores. An inverse relationship was found between anxiety and self-perception. Disturbed preschool children were less competent at performing tasks (311, 246, 177, 15, 16).

(17) ***Psychotherapy Papers***

- (a) Relational model of psychoanalysis (82) cost effectiveness of psychotherapy, psychotherapy reduces the use of medical services. Psychotherapy is more effective than the passage of time. Child psychotherapy is effective (113, 114, 150, 306, 307, 252, 253, 254).
- (b) Supervision of Psychotherapists (57).
- (c) Technique of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (150, 56).
- (d) Applied Psychoanalysis (59).
- (e) Psychoanalysis behaviour therapy and pharmacology (68).
- (f) Balint groups in general practice. A psychotherapeutic approach to general practice (53).
- (g) The psychoanalytic treatment of Hysterical Personality (51).
- (h) The psychoanalytic treatment of Narcissistic Personality (77).
- (i) Training therapist difficulties (204).
- (j) Registration of Psychotherapists and Psychotherapy Services (70, 74, 150).
- (k) Psychotherapy in the prison situation (36).
- (l) Contribution of Psychoanalysis to Psychiatry (72).

- (m) Attitudes to Psychiatry and Psychotherapy Training of Doctors (85, 318).
 - (n) European Psychotherapy, Counselling, and the Future of Psychiatry (84, 75, 76).
 - (o) Irish Standing Conference on Psychotherapy (66).
 - (p) Irish Psychiatry the Way Forward (65).
 - (q) The Boundaries of Psychotherapy (71).
 - (r) The Supervision of Trainee Therapists (57).
 - (s) Why Psychotherapy (58).
 - (t) The Effectiveness of Psychotherapy (54).
 - (u) Evidence-based Medicine, Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (17).
- (18) ***Miscellaneous***
- (a) The Effects of Sudden Infant Death on Families (19, 20).
 - (b) Impulsivity and Suicide (117).
 - (c) A 16 year follow-up of a Child Psychiatric Inpatient Population (214).
 - (d) A study of Psychosocial Health Status of Irish Traveller Mothers and Children (222).
 - (e) Ireland A Changing Society, Irish Families Under Stress, Volume IV, 1995.
 - (f) Leisure Activities in Adolescent School Children (165).
 - (g) The Effect of Domestic Violence on Children (186).
 - (h) Social Support and Behaviour Problems in Children (198).
 - (i) A Psychosocial Study of a Population of Diabetic Children and Adolescents (258).
 - (j) International Variations in Youth Drug Use (262, 263).

- (k) Cognitive Behavioural Intervention in a Group of Diabetic Children (287).
- (l) Psychopathology following a Road Traffic Accident (317).
- (m) Turner's syndrome (320, 321, 322, 323, 324).
- (n) The Measurement of Adolescent Adaptive Processes in Clinical Interview (350).
- (o) Delinquency in Irish Families (61).
- (p) Disconnection in Irish Families (62).
- (q) Existentialism and Psychiatry (63).