

Psychology adding value through partnership (PAVTP): Hydrocephalus screening a mental health screening and intervention pathway for children and young people with hydrocephalus (CYPwH)

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#### Rationale/Objectives

Hydrocephalus (seen in approx. 80% of Spina Bifida cases) is related to: poor quality of life (QOL); increased mental health (MH) problems and poorer long-term psychosocial outcomes. The PAVTP: Hydrocephalus Screening project developed a MH screening protocol and intervention pathway for CYPwH.

#### Methods

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and Hydrocephalus Outcome Questionnaire (HOQ) are completed by families prior to routine clinic appointments. Scores on the SDQ are then linked to a traffic light metaphor, indicating the level of MH concern, and potential route through the stepped intervention pathway. Interventions include: psychological self-help materials; support at home or school by SBH Scotland; referral to third sector workshops. Children already known to Child and Adolescent Mental Health or Learning Disability services are excluded from screening.

#### Results and Conclusion

Of the CYP screened, 36% of those with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (n = 22) fell into the red zone compared to 10% with Spina Bifida only (n = 10) and 5% in the general population indicating that CYPwH are at significant risk of MH problems. 'Overall Health Status' on the HOQ negatively correlated with SDQ 'Total Difficulties' scores indicating that: as health status decreases, MH difficulties increase. Many CYPwH receive additional support for their physical needs however their psychological and cognitive needs can be neglected. SBH Scotland family support is found to have a positive impact on wellbeing indicators. The impact of child-specific interventions requires further evaluation. The data sample should also extend to include a 'Hydrocephalus only' group. These findings suggest that MH needs could be met using a partnership approach to detection and intervention between third sector and health services allowing access to timely, stepped, preventative interventions without significant increase in resource. Project funded by SBH Scotland and R S McDonald.