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Mental Health problems in older children and adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Child and adolescent behavioural problems are very common, and estimates suggest that one in ten children and young people aged 5-16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder.¹ Between one in every 12 and one in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm, and admissions following self-harm have risen by 68% in the last ten years.¹

More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood, but less than half were treated appropriately at the time.¹ One reason for this is the lack of provision of child and adolescent mental health services in the UK, which is mirrored world-wide.^{2,3}

This leaves families, schools, community groups and Primary Care to shoulder the burden of managing these conditions.

This module will study the diagnosis and management of mental health problems in this age-group in Primary Care. Where the majority of the management occurs in Secondary Care (e.g. eating disorders) the management will not be discussed, though the detection or diagnosis (which often occurs in Primary Care) will be described.

This module is one of a pair of modules which deal with this topic. This module studies conditions which mainly occur in older school-children and adolescents. The accompanying module "Mental Health Problems in Young Children" covers the pre-school years and younger children, but obviously there is a lot of overlap between the modules and groups should be aware of this. The authors have attempted to avoid repeating information in both modules, except where this was unavoidable.