Institute for Children and Young People's Mental Health

at King's College London & Maudsley Hospital

Trauma & Adversity

Childhood trauma is a key modifiable risk factor for mental illness across the life-course. Our team leads basic and clinical research that aims to prevent exposure to trauma and to buffer its detrimental mental health consequences. With regard to basic science, we investigate how to best measure trauma exposure, which factors increase risk of trauma exposure and related psychopathology, what are the psychological and biological mechanisms through which trauma affects mental health, the epidemiology of trauma-related psychopathology, and computational methods for individual risk prediction of psychopathology in trauma exposed young people. With regard to clinical science, we have been developing new treatments for traumatised young people and methods to scale up these interventions through e-health platforms.

Anxiety and Depression

Our research aims to develop a process to predict which CBT option will work best for each child, speeding up the journey to recovery. Projects include CUES-Ed, a hugely successful CBT programme for schools and DISCOVER, a mental health programme for anxious and depressed teenagers which uses a range of innovative, multi-media methods, including a DISCOVER app, to teach young people strategies for tackling emotional problems. We have developed and evaluated *Stressbusters,* a computerised CBT intervention, which has been shown reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and to have positive effects on school attendance. We are currently collaborating on a new project to treat refractory depression in teenagers and to prevent depressive relapse, by delivering Mindfulness Based Interventions for adolescents and their carers.

Our research focuses on genetic and environmental influences on the development and treatment of anxiety and depression. We aim to identify risk factors and potential new treatments, and our teams are also modelling the processes underlying the development, maintenance and treatment of anxiety disorders, as well as post-treatment relapse.

Our projects include the GLAD study, which is the largest anxiety and depression project ever undertaken, and is part of the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) BioResource. We also lead the world famous longitudinal Twin's Early Development Study (TEDS), which looks at the role of genes versus the environment by studying twins across multiple generations. Our Genes for Treatment study was the first study ever to explore the role of genetic factors, alongside other more traditional variables, as possible predictors of outcome following psychological treatment for anxiety in young people.

The senior investigators in the Trauma & Adversity group are also active clinicians leading the National & Specialist CAMHS Clinic for Trauma, Anxiety, and Depression. This is a is a Tier-4, multi-disciplinary team, working with young people and mental health practitioners across the UK and internationally. The team primarily offers assessment and treatment to children and adolescents who experience severe and/or treatment-resistant post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety disorders and unipolar depression, often with the aim to prevent inpatient admission. The team also delivers clinical training and offers clinical supervision to local CAMHS teams and schools. Finally, the team works with the UK government and local commissioning groups to set up and manage public health initiatives in response to disasters and emergencies. This clinical activity informs our research directions though feedback from young patients and their families and ensures rapid implementation of our discoveries.

Institute for Children and Young People's Mental Health

at King's College London & Maudsley Hospital

Working with our clinical colleagues in SLaM was essential in the development of the GLAD Study. One of our key goals with this study is to enable further research to help reduce the trial and error process currently seen in identifying the best treatment for every patient, something our participants tell us they care about a lot. We are therefore collaborating with several clinical academic teams within and beyond SLaM to begin studies that will help identify which treatments work for whom and why.

By combining research and clinical activity, the Trauma & Adversity group aims to improve prevention and treatment of the complex, trans-diagnostic psychopathology emerging after experiences of childhood trauma.

With both GLAD and TEDS we hope to access medical record information to build and even more detailed picture of treatment outcomes, and how these relate to patient characteristics such as comorbid physical health problems. Within GLAD we will be running a series of studies exploring predictors of treatment outcomes and developing new approaches to treatment.

Key Publications

- Lewis, S.J., Arseneault, L., Caspi, A., Fisher, H.L., Matthews, T., Moffitt, T.E., Odgers, C.L., Stahl, D., Teng, J.Y., Danese, A. The Epidemiology of Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in a Representative Cohort of Young People. Lancet Psychiatry. 2019; 6(3):247-256. doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(19)30031-8
- Baldwin, J.R., Reuben, A., Newbury, J., Danese, A. Agreement between prospective and retrospective measures of childhood victimization: a systematic review and meta-analysis. JAMA Psychiatry 2019; 76(6):584-593. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2019.0097
- Meehan A.J., Latham R.M., Arseneault L., Stahl D., Fisher H.L., Danese A. Developing an individualized risk calculator for psychopathology among young people victimized during childhood: A population-representative cohort study. J Affect Disord. 2020; 262:90-98. doi:10.1016/j.jad.2019.10.034
- Danese, A., Smith, P., Chitsabesan, P., Dubicka, B. Child and adolescent mental health amidst emergencies and disasters. Br J Psychiatry. 2019 Nov 13:1-4 doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2019.244P [E-pub]
- Smith, P., Yule, W., Perrin, S., Tranah, T., Dalgleish, T., Clark, D.M.
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy for PTSD in children and adolescents: a preliminary
- randomized controlled trial. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry. 2007
- 46:1051-1061. doi: 10.1097/CHI.0b013e318067e288
- Smith, P., Dalgleish, T., & Meiser-Stedman, R. (2019). Practitioner Review: Posttraumatic stress disorder and its treatment in children and adolescents. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines. 60, 5, 500-515
- Ottisova, L., Smith, P., Shetty, H., Stahl, D., Downs, J., & Oram, S. (2018). Psychological consequences of child trafficking: An historical cohort study of trafficked children in contact with secondary mental health services. PLoS ONE, 13, 3, e0192321
- Meiser-Stedman, R., Smith, P., McKinnon, A., Dixon, C., Trickey, D., Ehlers, A., Clark, D.M., Boyle, A., Watson, P., Goodyer, I., Dalgleish, T. (2017). Cognitive therapy as an early treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder in children and adolescents: a randomized controlled trial addressing

preliminary efficacy and mechanisms of action. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines. 58, 5, 623-633

- Smith, P., Scott, R., Eshkevari, E., Jatta, F., Leigh, E., Harris, V., Robinson, A., Abeles, P., Proudfoot, J., Verduyn, C., Yule, W. (2015). Computerised CBT for depressed adolescents: Randomised controlled trial. Behaviour Research and Therapy. 73, 104-110

- Ames, C.S., Richardson, J., Payne, S., Smith, P., Leigh, E. (2014). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression in adolescents. Child and Adolescent Mental Health. 19,1, 74-78

- Leigh, E., Smith, P., Milavic, G., Stringaris, A. (2012). Mood regulation in youth: Research findings and clinical approaches to irritability and short-lived episodes of mania-like symptoms. Current Opinion in Psychiatry. 25, 4, 271-276