EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS AND IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF MENSTRUAL PROBLEMS

Methods

The ‘Nurturing Change’ study is a feasibility and pilot randomised controlled trial (RCT) of a video-feedback parenting intervention for foster and kinship carers looking after children under 7 years old, presenting attachment difficulties in the realm of RAD. RAD symptoms were assessed via caregiver questionnaires as well as the semi-structured Disturbances of Attachment Interview. Several measures of children’s emotional-behavioural functioning were also collected, including the Child Behaviour Check List (CBCL), the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, and the Development and Well-Being Assessment.

Results

Out of more than 300 children invited to the study, the carers of nearly 100 children were initially screened for attachment difficulties using questionnaires, with 67 completing the Disturbances of Attachment Interview. Of these, 30 families proceeded to be recruited into the RCT, from which baseline data was collected (including the measures of children’s emotional-behavioural functioning). Approximately one third of children met criteria for RAD, according to the interview data. However, it is unclear if the prevalence in this sample is representative of the population of children in foster and kinship care in the UK due to low response rate and potential non-randomness of non-response. Analyses of the remaining findings are still ongoing, but the CBCL results, for example, reveal high levels of emotional-behavioural problems, with many subscales in the clinical range, such as Externalising and Total problems.

Conclusions

The study brings to light the challenges of completing research in the foster care context in the UK. However, stakeholders were unanimous that research of this kind is urgently needed. The high levels of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties found highlight the vulnerability of children in care and the need for evidence-based interventions to address them. Feasibility insights for a future trial of the current intervention will be discussed. Regarding children’s psychopathology results, first, the significance of the prevalence of RAD symptoms that we found will be discussed in relation to existing data from children in foster and institutional care worldwide, as well as the limitations of a RAD ‘research diagnosis’ and the difficulties around the RAD clinical diagnosis more broadly. Second, the significance of children’s level of difficulties in the other scales and association between their psychopathology symptoms and attachment problems will be discussed.

British Academy of Childhood Disability

IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF MENSTRUAL PROBLEMS IN YOUNG PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES OR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES – INITIAL INSIGHTS FROM A PILOT SURVEY

Background

Puberty and menarche can be a challenging time for young people with additional needs resulting from physical disabilities or learning difficulties. Patients and carers often turn to clinicians for advice on managing anything from normal menstruation to problems including dysmenorrhea and menorrhagia. It is important that doctors who see young people with disabilities have a good understanding of these issues, recognising the distress they may cause. Paediatricians should have skills and knowledge sufficient to initially assess and manage these problems and an awareness of where to signpost or refer to locally.

Objectives

To assess current knowledge and understanding of the management of menstruation difficulties in young people