

An evidence synthesis of risk identification, assessment and management for young people using tier 4 inpatient child and adolescent mental health services

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Plain English summary

Young people using tier 4 inpatient CAMHS

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Plain English summary

In our two-part study we brought together evidence in the area of risk for young people admitted to mental health hospital. First, we searched two electronic databases, finding 124 articles. Most were concerned with clinical risks, such as the risks of suicide. Using diagrams we grouped these articles together under a number of themes.

Young people who had been inpatients in mental health hospital, carers, managers and professionals helped us prioritise the types of risk we should concentrate on in the second part of our study. Our top two priorities were the risks of dislocation and contagion. We used the word 'dislocation' to refer to the risks of being removed from normal life, of experiencing challenges to identity and of being stigmatised. We used it to refer to the risks to friendships and families, and to education. We used 'contagion' to refer to the risks of learning unhelpful behaviour and making unhelpful friendships.

We searched 17 databases and a large number of websites for evidence in these areas. We asked hospital staff to send us information on how they managed these risks and we searched journals and reference lists. We identified 40 items to include in our review and 20 policy and guidance documents. The quality of the studies varied. We grouped the evidence together under seven categories.

We found little evidence to guide practice. The risks of dislocation and contagion are important, but research is needed to inform how staff might identify, assess and manage them.

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