A joint geriatric medical/psychiatric day hospital for older people

The Day Unit provides assessment and rehabilitation for patients from elderly medicine and elderly psychiatry. There are ambulance places for 16 patients per day and the day hospital can take up to 25 patients per day if they are able to provide their own transport. The staffing consists of:

- Staffing Nursing: G grade sister RGN
- Psychiatry: E grade staff nurse RGN
- Speech and language therapist
- 2 Health Care Assistants (1WTE)
- Occupational therapy: 3 sessions per week
- Dietetics daily input from general hospital from mid morning to lunchtime

The patients from psychiatry tend to attend on a 1 day a week basis over a few weeks for a full assessment of their physical and mental health, including cognition along with ADL, nursing assessment and assessment from other specialities as necessary. At the end of assessment there is usually a multidisciplinary meeting; a diagnosis may be discussed along with identified problems, needs and a management plan. Some patients attend for one-day physical assessment only.

Some medical patients attend on a weekly basis and spend all day at the day hospital. Most of the patients from geriatric medicine attend on a sessional basis for specific clinics or assessments. The main areas covered are strokes, Parkinson’s and falls. Other physical assessments include 24 hr BPs and Doppler recordings. There is also a wound clinic run by the tissue viability nurse.

The advantages of a joint assessment unit (Geriatric Medicine and Psychiatry) are that patients often have a mixture of physical and mental health problems. The day hospital enables the exploration of all relevant issues. This may mean a formal referral between Consultants (Psychiatric and Geriatric Medicine) or a more informal basis using the skills of the staff. Access to physical treatments and assessments are made a lot easier. Even though staff are not doubly qualified, it is apparent that skills are soon developed in areas in which the staff have not been trained.

There are a few disadvantages. It is difficult for the day hospital to accommodate very disturbed or wandering patients due to low staffing levels and the intensity of staff input into the more sessional based assessments. Difficult behaviours can also be distressing to other patients. The ability to provide therapeutic activities is limited, particularly in the case of depression management. We tend to use this day hospital for the assessment of cognitive impairment and use a functional day hospital for the assessment and management of people suffering from functional disorders.
Code: 02

If you wish more information we can put you in touch with the service. Please contact the network co-ordinator on and quote the ‘Code’ at the bottom of the service description:

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