

Collaborative School-Clinics

A Special Education School Clinic to improve the Well-being of Children with Intellectual Disabilities

Introduction

School clinics provide outreach paediatric and mental health services to improve the wellbeing needs of children and adolescents with an intellectual or developmental disability and enhance their learning capacity. Clinics are a multidisciplinary collaboration involving paediatricians, psychologists, social workers, principals, school counsellors, teachers and disability workers. CHW School-Link and PECAT have delivered a school clinic in collaboration with a special education school since 2015.

Objectives

- To provide outreach paediatric services to meet the needs of children and adolescents with mental health problems and an intellectual or developmental disability.
- To provide teaching opportunities for registrars and other students of PECAT and the Department of Psychological Medicine at the Children's Hospital at Westmead.

Methodology

After some initial planning the CHW School-Link/PECAT Team met with a school for specific purpose in 2015 and have met 4 times a year since then. The basic structure of the clinic is as below:

- School will refer the child to the school clinic
- School clinic team will send out an email or package with all the required forms for the family and school. The participating school will return these forms with referral and consent for information exchange at least two weeks before the scheduled clinic date.
- Secretary to give an update on the date, time and the running sheet of the day
- School clinic team to review the forms and information reports and prepare questions for the clinic.
- On the day of the clinic, the school clinic team and the school are to meet for a case consultation to review the cases and review cases for the day before families arrive.
- Lead paediatrician will lead the consultation for each case. Secretary to monitor schedule.
- After all the sessions, the school clinic team will make formulations and recommendations that are recorded by the secretary and the registrar.
- The Registrar is to complete letters of recommendation which is checked by members of the panel within two weeks of the clinic date.
- Administration assistant will send out the letters to the school and update client files.
- Registrar to contact families for follow-up of recommendation implementation between clinic dates.

Results

The collaborative school clinic has met 20 young people and their families over 56 consultations. The students either had a moderate (7), severe (12) or profound (1) intellectual disability and varied in age from 8-16 years. An audit of these cases was conducted. The main presenting problems are detailed below;

Chart 1. School Clinic Presenting Problems

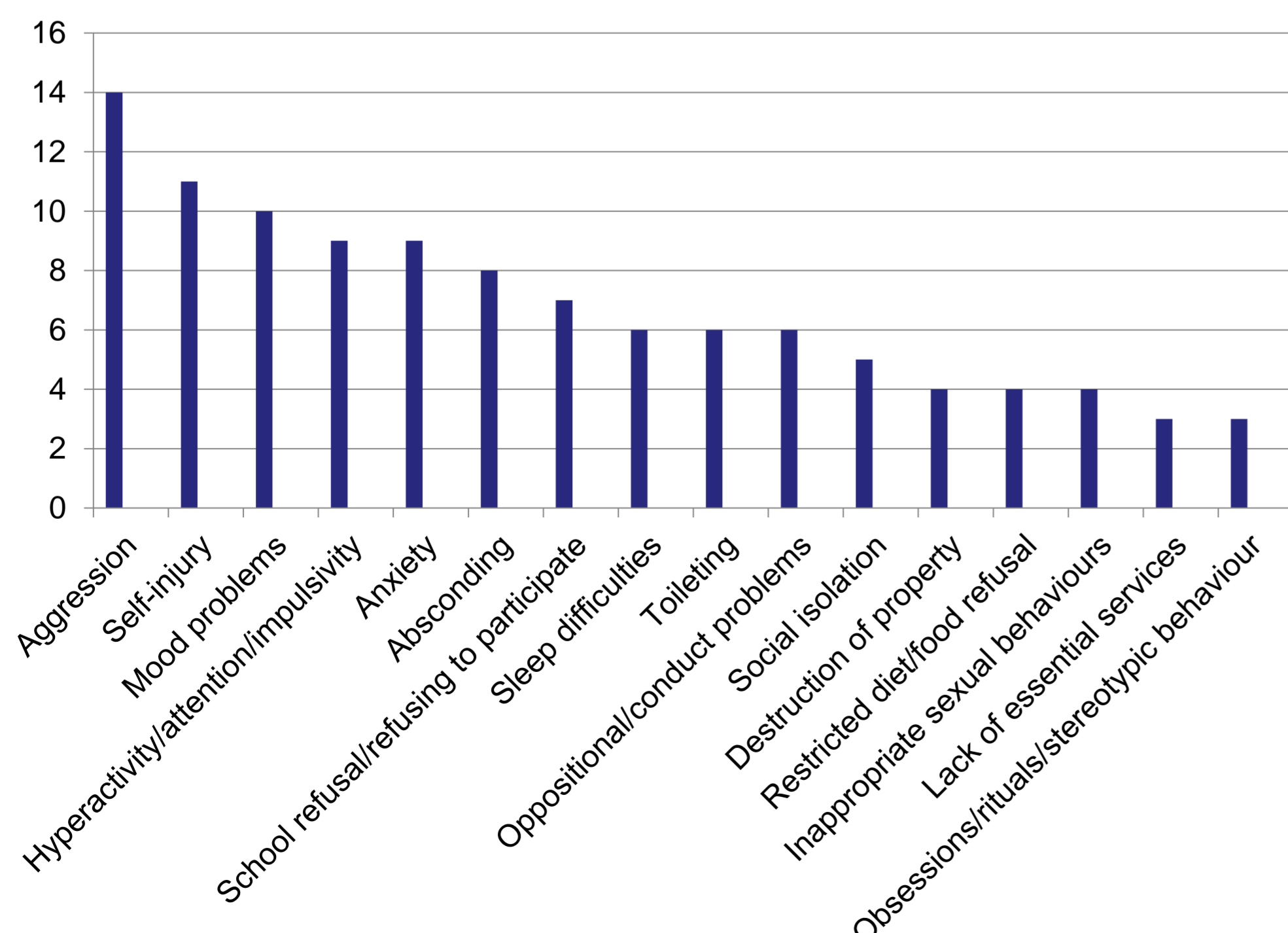
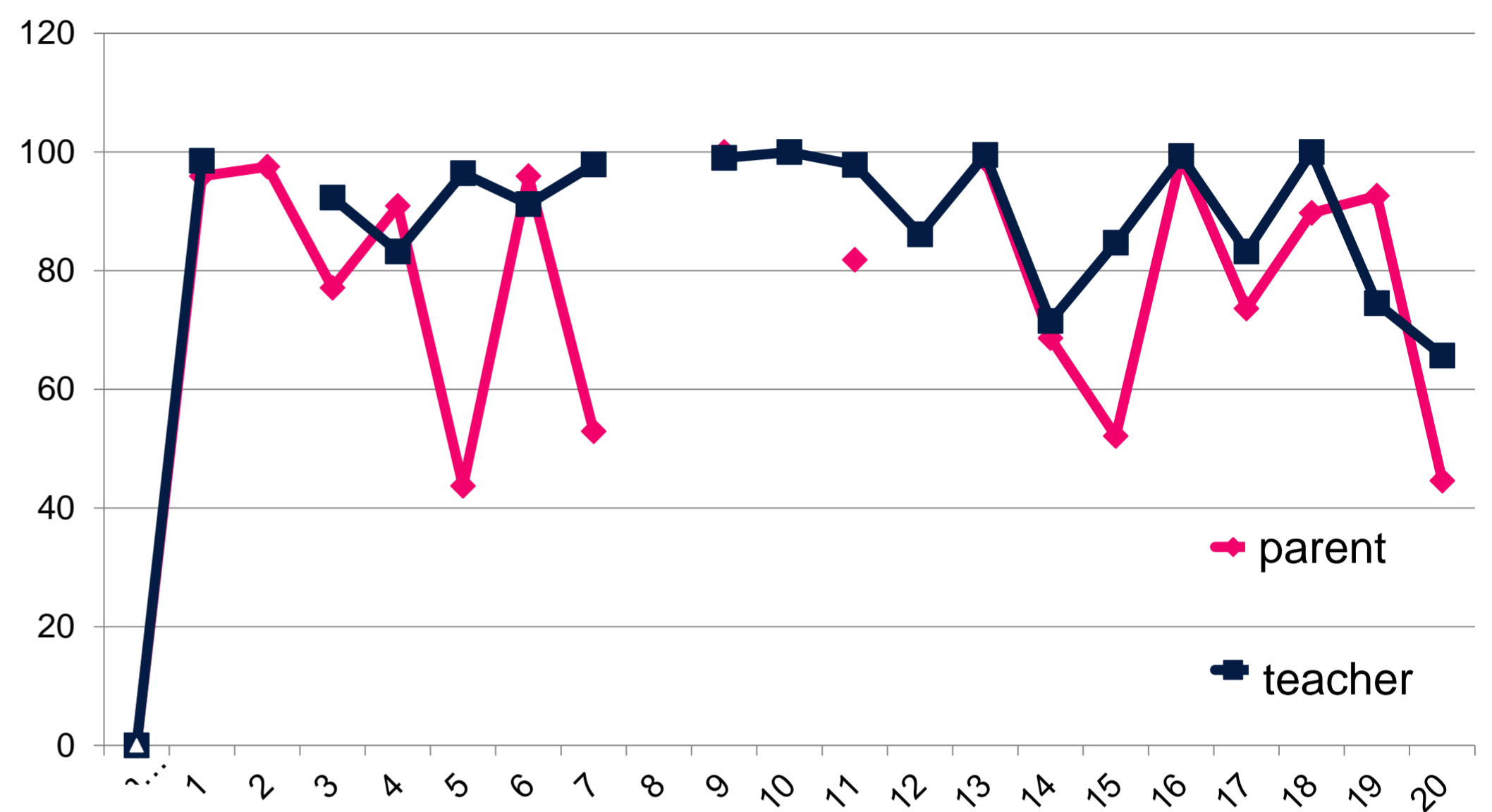


Chart 2: The Developmental Behaviour Checklist Total Behaviour Problem Scores as viewed by Parent & Teacher *based on IQ percentiles



Teachers on average reported their students' behaviour as more severe than parent reports. Each child was in the clinical range for behaviour problems as reported by their teachers. 13 of the 17 students who completed the DBC, scored their child in the clinical range, whilst 4 students were rated just under.

After each clinic the multidisciplinary school clinic team were able to provide a list of recommendations to the school and family in order to improve the child's wellbeing. The following is a summary of the various recommendations made for the s20 students over a total of 56 consultations.

Recommendations	Frequency	% of clinics
Medication changes	51	91
Medical investigation	5	9
Behaviour support	46	82
Referrals	47	84
Collaboration	19	34
NDIS advice	13	23
Modifications to home or school	10	18
Sensory strategies	12	21
Communication Strategies	19	34
Daily living strategies	13	23
Family support	18	32
Advocacy	14	25

Conclusion

School Clinics are important in addressing the wellbeing concerns of children with an intellectual disability and complex medical, behaviour, emotional and mental health problems. School Clinics provide an ideal holistic environment for parents, education, disability, health and other professionals to work together towards common goals.

Resources

For more information about how to run a school-clinic please visit *The School Kit Toolkit* website www.schoolkit.org.au

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