

BACKGROUND

Parents of children with medical complexity (CMC) provide life-saving care to their chronically ill, technology-dependent children. Parents have suboptimal mental health, but little is known about their psychiatric profiles.

We evaluated a novel partnership between a paediatric Complex Care program and an adult psychiatry service for integrated referrals for parents needing diagnostic assessment and treatment for suspected mental illness.

METHODS

A descriptive case series using a retrospective chart review of electronic medical records during a three-year period. We included all parents of CMC seen in the psychiatric service (n=57).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Timely and accessible mental health care is needed for this at-risk population. Partnership between paediatric and psychiatric services is feasible and may be adapted in other Complex Care programs. Screening parents for psychiatric illnesses within paediatric programs is an important direction for future research.

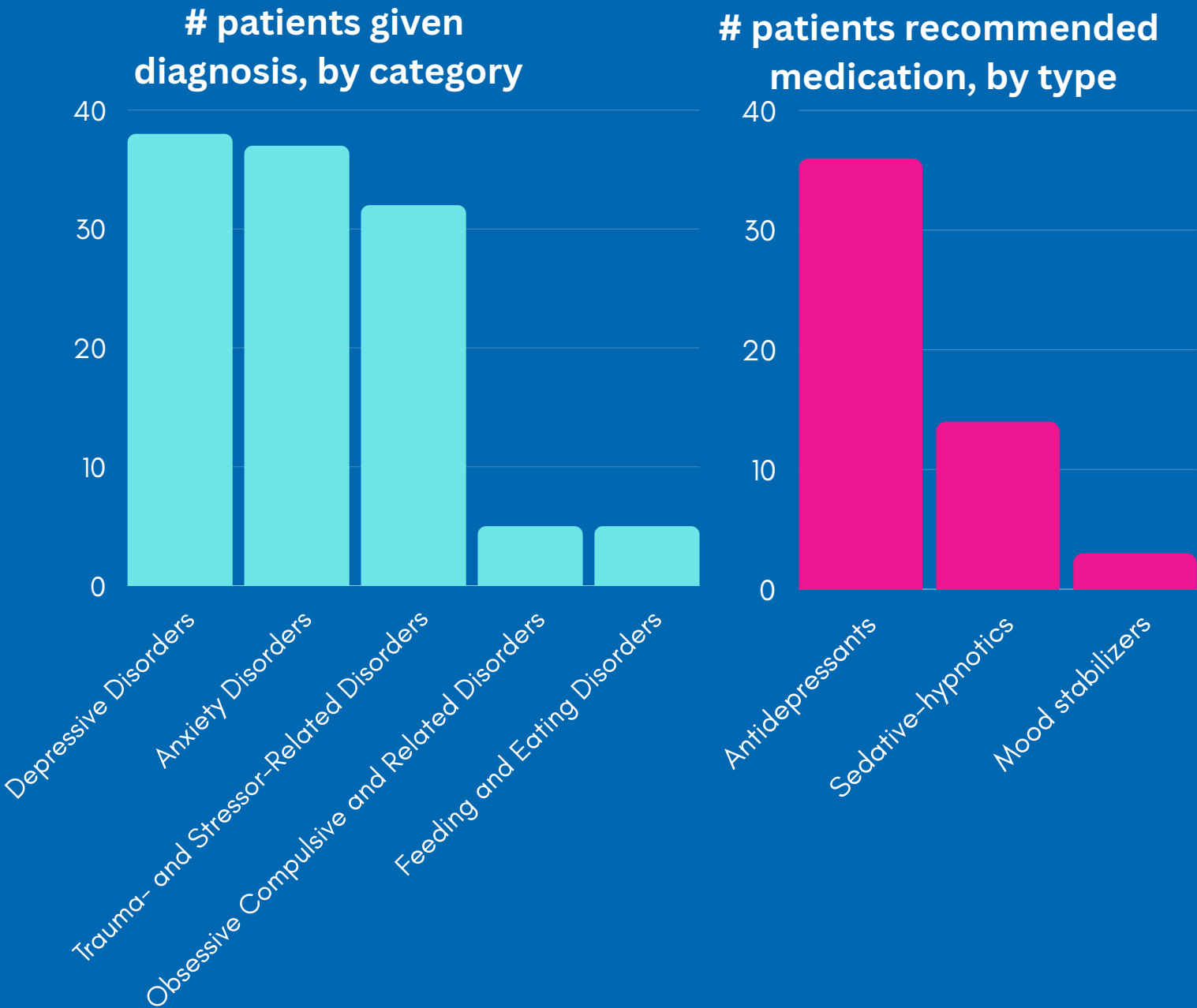
AUTHORS

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Of the 57 parents of medically complex children referred to psychiatry, 79% received a new diagnosis, 95% were recommended psychotherapy and 75% were recommended medication

CLINICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC OUTCOMES



Mean age (SD) 42 (6)
84% women



53% immigrated to Canada



54% unemployed



63% known past psychiatric diagnosis



59% insomnia or sleep difficulties



67% reported adverse childhood experiences

DISCUSSION

We identified a high number of psychiatric illnesses requiring intervention in the referred parents.

The partnership allowed for timely and flexible access to psychiatric care, facilitated by the paediatric team.

History of adversity and sleep difficulties may indicate psychiatric risk and offer opportunities for screening, prevention and intervention.



61% had one or more follow up appointments



All consults were virtual



Average wait time to consult 6.7 weeks

Median of 4 follow ups (1-15)