PROFESSOR ANTHONY BATEMAN VISITS THE PROJECT AIR STRATEGY

Professor Anthony Bateman provided a master class on the treatment of antisocial personality disorder.

An interview with Professor Bateman by Project Air is now available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=QQLc5tB05vc

Professor Bateman also presented at Project Air’s 12th International Conference on Personality Disorders “Working with Antisocial Personality Disorder: what research and clinical experience teach us”. https://www.projectairstrategy.org/content/groups/public/@web/@project-air/documents/doc/uow253502.pdf

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http://twitter.com/Project_Air
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Air-Strategy/207832305897441
Personalizing treatment packages by including concepts from different therapy approaches may be one way to do this, but a particularly challenging one. It requires solid knowledge about effective processes of change in different types of psychotherapy. It requires a compass helping the therapist to select an effective treatment strategy at the outset of treatment, and all along the treatment, facing a particular patient.

My keynote talk at the Friday conference will address the first challenge. A review of mechanisms of change, as they are discussed and empirically studied across different types of treatment, provide the audience with an exploratory prism of how and why treatment for personality disorders may work. The focus will be laid on studies conducted with variety of personality pathology.

On Saturday, my clinical workshop will address the second challenge. Case formulation may be used by clinicians as a compass for selecting appropriate interventions and relationship styles with individual patients. Facing the patient’s disruptive experience, an effective case conceptualization provides the therapist with a straightforward and flexible guide. It may help develop expertise in psychotherapy, foster awareness, symbolization, responsiveness, focus and collaboration, thus promotes change.

Ueli Kramer, PhD, is Privat-Docent, psychotherapy researcher and clinical psychotherapist according to Federal Law, at the Department of Psychiatry, Institute of Psychotherapy and General Psychiatry Service, University of Lausanne, Switzerland. He holds an adjunct appointment at the Department of Psychology, University of Windsor, Canada. His research focuses on process and outcome in psychotherapy, in particular the mechanisms of change in treatments of personality disorders and case formulation in personality disorders. He is a broadly trained clinician, working from an integrative psychotherapy perspective. Dr. Kramer is the co-recipient of the 2015 Inger Salling Award, the recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Early Career Achievement Award of the Society for Psychotherapy Research, of the 2016 Hamburg Award for Personality Disorders, of the 2018 Marvin Goldfried New Researcher Award of the Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration and the 2019 AEMD Marina Picasso Award.

https://www.elsevier.com/books/case-formulation-for-personality-disorders/kramer/978-0-12-813521-1
It will be held on Friday 8th November 2019 in the beautiful surrounds of the University of Wollongong, one hour south of central Sydney Australia on the coast with spectacular pristine beaches and breathtaking mountains.

There is also a pre-conference Consumer, Family and Carer day on Thursday, and an all-day clinical workshop on Saturday.

The Chair of the National Mental Health Commission, Mrs Lucy Brogden AM will open the conference that features innovative work in personality disorder and complex trauma with a special theme on Personalising Effective Treatment. There will be a wide range of international presenters throughout the conference talking about research, service developments and innovative approaches to treatment and early intervention.

- **Professor Ueli Kramer** University of Lausanne (Switzerland) provides a keynote on Effective processes in treatment for personality disorder: what science teaches us.
- Other presentations include:
  - **Professor Per Hoglend** Institute of Clinical Medicine University of Oslo (Norway) *What psychotherapists need to know about transference and countertransference in effective treatment of personality disorder*
  - **Aaron Fornarino** (South Australia) *Lived Experience: Journey to recovery*
  - **Dr Lise Laporte** McGill University (Canada) *My Child and Me: A Two Components Program for Parents with Borderline Personality Disorder and their Case Workers*
  - **Professor Chui-De Chiu** (Chinese University of Hong Kong) *Struggling back to myself: A deficit in shifting visuospatial perspectives in borderline personality disorder*
  - **Charlotte van Schie** (University of Leiden – Netherlands and University of Wollongong) *Altered reliving of positive and neutral autobiographical memories in patients with Borderline Personality Disorder*

**SATURDAY CLINICAL WORKSHOP:**

**Professor Kramer** will also present a one-day program on *Case Formulation for Personality Disorders: How to Foster Therapist Responsiveness.* The workshop will give an overview of the necessary components of a successful case formulation for personality disorder, by adopting an integrative and disorder-oriented approach, and will focus on how therapists can productively take advantage of responsiveness in the therapy process.

**CONSUMER AND CARER DAY**

On Thursday 7 November will be a pre-conference Consumer, Family and Carer Day with the theme “Respecting Perspectives” at the University of Wollongong Australia. The day will include lived experiences from consumers, family and carers as well as developments in peer work and recovery based programs.

**Aaron Fornarino** (South Australia) will present on ‘Why Me? Turning Points With Borderline Personality Disorder’. Aaron has lived with Borderline Personality Disorder for over 25 years and has navigated through discrimination within the mental health system. Aaron will discuss his personal experience with BPD, what hindered moving forward and what helped. Aaron will also discuss challenges associated with bitterness, resentment, substance abuse and helpful suggestions on how to overcome problems with BPD.

**Mahlie Jewell** will present on ‘Art practice as distress tolerance: A lived experience perspective’. Mahlie will explore through this interactive workshop how art practice can be used to regulate emotions, help manage distress and provide alternative mindfulness practices outside the current treatment guidelines. Mahlie will demonstrate how the process of art-making can create a more focused sense of self, direct negative energy and anxiety into alternative positive behaviours. Mahlie will provide hands-on art practice techniques that have enabled her to self-regulate and move through thoughts and feelings safely.

Mahlie is an artist and Wiradjuri woman with a diploma in mental health who recently completed her undergraduate degree in communication design with speciality in co-design from Billy Blue. Mahlie’s advocacy on the experiences of living with borderline personality disorder, PTSD and brain injury have been published nationally and she has lead roles in consumer participation with The Australian BPD Foundation, Project Air Strategy, Department of Education, Centre for Population Health, SANE Australia, and The NSW Mental Health Commission. She is currently completing a Masters of Art Therapy at University of Western Sydney.

Other presentations for the Consumer, Family and Carer Day include a workshop by **Natalie Malcolmson** (BPD Awareness ACT) “Peer-Led DBT Skills Groups: Can They Work?”
Minister Taylor was keen to hear about the work being done by Project Air for young people being challenged by personality disorder, self-harm and suicide in regional communities.

The Project Air Strategy is an internationally recognised leader in research, education and treatment that aims to enhance care for patients and their families and carers. It supports the NSW Mental Health Commission’s Living Well strategic plan. The rollout of the strategy has included three key overlapping initiatives: training of Health staff in evidence-based approaches to working with people with personality disorder, the development and support of stepped care clinics within local health districts, and the Air Academy - an initiative to support Health staff involved treatment clinics. These three initiatives have been designed to increase the skill level of staff across different mental health settings within each district, increase accessibility and quality of care for individuals with personality disorder and their families and carers, and provide ongoing support to make this sustainable. At end June 2019 there were 25 stepped care clinics across over 40 sites launched within adult and adolescent services will continue to grow as Project Air continues to be rolled out.
PROJECT AIR STRATEGY FOR PERSONALITY DISORDERS

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (12:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. What is the Government doing to support people with personality disorders?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:53): The Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders enhances the capacity of New South Wales public health services to diagnose and provide effective treatment for people with personality disorders. The Government invests $1.1 million annually in Project Air. This funding supports people with personality disorders across their lifespan. Project Air works with health services, other government agencies, clinicians, families and carers, and consumers to provide tailored interventions to improve treatment for personality disorders. Clinicians attending Project Air training and consultations are provided with skills-based learning, enabling them to implement and deliver a stepped care model for evidence-based treatment, including establishing brief intervention Gold Card Clinics.

The stepped care Gold Card Clinic offers three sessions of rapid follow-up, support care planning and skills training for consumers presenting in distress and crisis, plus a further session connecting with carers, partners and families. There are now over 25 Gold Card Clinics located within local health districts and are positioned alongside acute mental health services. These clinics offer an alternative to emergency department and inpatient admission, providing safe and effective care and follow-up, tailored to meet the needs of people with these challenges, and they are challenges. Evaluation of this approach, compared with treatment as usual in a randomised controlled trial, demonstrated a reduction in presentations to emergency departments by a staggering 22 per cent. When an admission was clinically indicated, the length of stay in hospital was significantly reduced from an average of 13.46 days to 4.28 days per admission. That is a great achievement for this project. Analysis of longitudinal patient data demonstrates that people graduating from these clinics experience significant improvement in symptoms, quality of life and productivity from initial assessment to follow-up at 12 months.

There are significantly lower ratings of suicidal ideation and attempts and reduced incidents of deliberate self-harm. Published evaluation of the Project Air approach has demonstrated the average cost saving for treating personality disorder using its model of care is $3,900 per patient per year. So far across New South Wales 6,000 mental health, drug and alcohol and hospital staff have received training. The great thing about this program is that it trains local people in health districts to deliver the service and follow-up for clients. Of that number, 32 per cent were nurses, 24 per cent were psychologists, 24 per cent were allied health workers and 15 per cent were psychiatrists and senior leaders. This is an exceptionally successful program. I have visited one site in Wollongong. This is a serious issue.
Project Air partners with the Western Australian Department of Health and WA Mental Health Commissioner for a state-wide roll-out

Training opportunities were provided at various locations in May 2019 across the five health services, including remote locations such as Karratha and Kalgoorlie. Around 750 health professionals attended one of the training sessions held. There were also four community forums, and three GP forums facilitated by Project Air during the visit.

Project Air partners with the South Australian BPD Collaborative to support training, research and service redesign

A full day whole of service training opportunity was provided in Adelaide in early September for 86 health professionals. Bespoke Train the Trainer Assessment and Brief Intervention Clinic (ABiC) programs were provided for around 25 of those who attended the full day training.

Over the past year the Project Air Strategy team has helped to spread the hopeful messages about early intervention, treatability and recovery of personality disorders.

Collaborating with the BPD Co South Australia: R to L : Brin Grenyer (Project Air), Cathy McLeod Everitt (BPD Co), Judy O’Sullivan (BPD Co), Laura Cooke-O’Connor (BPD Co), Ely Marceau (Project Air), at the Borderline Personality Disorder Collaborative Headquarters in Adelaide
**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**Spain** Project Air’s Team presented at the 5th International Congress on Borderline Personality Disorder and Allied Disorders

“Rethinking Borderline Personality Disorder: Improving Treatment and Training” Sitges/Barcelona, Spain (B Grenyer, M Townsend; Project Air symposium presentation: “E Huxley, Project Air);


“A randomised controlled trial - the efficacy of a modified dialectical behaviour therapy on young adult prisoners who engage in self-harm” Arina Baharin (University of Wollongong, School of Psychology, Australia) M. M. Ahmad Zahari, B. Grenyer

A one-year follow-up study of capacity to love and work: “What components of Borderline Personality Disorder most impair interpersonal and vocational functioning?” Caitlin Miller (University of Wollongong School of Psychology, Australia) K. Lewis, M. Townsend, B. Grenyer

**Portugal** Project Air’s Professor Brin Grenyer presented at the ENMESH 2019 European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation Conference, Lisbon University- “Managing mental health system complexity” Professor Brin Grenyer presented: “Stepped care for personality disorder - A better strategy for transitioning from acute to community care”, and at the Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration 35th Annual Conference, Lisbon University, “Integrative psychotherapy for personality disorder: a stepped care randomised controlled trial”

**Germany** Project Air’s Dr Ely Marceau presented at the International Conference for Conversation Analysis and Psychotherapy. “Core Conflictual Relationship Themes told early in therapy predict improvement”

**Malaysia** Project Air’s Arina Baharin has continued her work on implementing a modified Dialectical Behaviour Therapy program for self-harming youth in the correctional setting.
Clinician attitudes towards borderline personality disorder: A 15-year comparison

NICHOLAS J.S. DAY, ANNALISE HUNT, LOUISE CORTIS-JONES AND BRIN F. GRENYER

Abstract

In this study, clinician attitudes were compared at a large public hospital in Sydney, Australia, collected in 2004 and 2019. Two of the five surveys’ versions (2019 and 2004) were longitudinal, while the other three were performed by the same researcher on different clinic’s wards. The five surveys included a total of 20 identical questions. The 2015 sample also completed the Attitude to Deliberate Self-Harm Scale. Mental health staff were more concerned about patients’ safety, while carers were more concerned about service quality. Participants identified more on treatment approaches and skills (e.g. empathy) and less on pathologizing individuals (e.g. social distance), compared to the earlier year. Participants were more likely to rely on evidence-based practice in 2019 than in 2004.

Conclusions

The attitude survey results were promising for the implementation of mental health services. There were improvements in attitudes, beliefs and practice approaches, as well as increased use of evidence. The implementation of the Project AIR strategy also contributed to changes in attitudes and beliefs about people with personality disorder. There is a need for further research to understand the factors that contribute to these changes in attitudes.

Keywords

Personality disorder, mental health, attitudes, beliefs, practice approaches, evidence-based practice.

SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM THE PROJECT AIR STRATEGY


The lived experience of recovery in borderline personality disorder: a qualitative study

Caitlin E. Miller, Lewis KL, Huxley E, Townsend ML, Grenyer BFS

ABSTRACT

Studies of neurobiological mechanisms in borderline personality disorder (BPD) have increased our understanding of the complex biological and psychological processes that underlie symptom expression. This article examines neurobiological studies that: (a) examine prospective correlates of BPD; or (b) examine neurobiological factors altered by psychotherapy. Neuroimaging studies (fMRI, resting-state fMRI, structural imaging) provide evidence of altered neural activation and connectivity that were associated with key symptoms of BPD. Further, neuroimaging studies demonstrated changes in neural activation and connectivity following psychotherapy, particularly in patients with BPD. Although the current literature on neurobiological mechanisms in BPD is extensive, the exact role of these processes remains unclear. Additional studies are required to elucidate the complex interplay of these processes in the development and maintenance of BPD symptoms.

Keywords: Neurobiological mechanisms, Borderline personality disorder, psychotherapy, neural activation, connectivity, altered brain functioning as a result of psychotherapy.

Introduction

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a psychiatric disorder characterized by impairments in mood regulation, interpersonal relationships, self-image, and identity. It is associated with high suicide risk and significant impairments in quality of life, leading to high costs to society. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) describes BPD as an enduring pattern of instability and impermanence in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and identity, and is characterized by impulsive behaviors, irritability, and difficulties in emotion regulation.

The complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors is thought to contribute to the development and maintenance of BPD symptoms. Studies of neurobiological mechanisms in BPD have increased our understanding of the complex biological and psychological processes that underlie symptom expression. This article examines the literature on neurobiological studies that: (a) examine prospective correlates of BPD; or (b) examine neurobiological factors altered by psychotherapy.

Neuroimaging Studies

Neuroimaging studies (fMRI, resting-state fMRI, structural imaging) provide evidence of altered neural activation and connectivity that were associated with key symptoms of BPD. For example, using fMRI, studies have identified altered neural activation and connectivity in areas subserving executive control and emotion regulation in patients with BPD. These findings suggest that altered neural activation and connectivity in these regions may be associated with difficulties in emotion regulation and interpersonal relationships, core symptoms of BPD.

Psychotherapy and Neuroimaging Studies

Psychotherapy alters neural activation and connectivity of regions subserving executive control and emotion regulation. For example, a recent study using fMRI demonstrated changes in neural activation and connectivity in patients with BPD following psychotherapy. These findings suggest that psychotherapy may alter neural activation and connectivity in regions subserving executive control and emotion regulation, which may contribute to improvements in symptom expression.

Conclusion

Additional studies are required to elucidate the complex interplay of these processes in the development and maintenance of BPD symptoms. Further, the exact role of these processes in the development and maintenance of BPD symptoms remains unclear. Future research should focus on elucidating the complex interplay of these processes in the development and maintenance of BPD symptoms, and developing effective treatments that address these processes.
Project Air Strategy have developed two new national e-learning training programs.

One is focused on helping adolescents with emerging difficulties of emerging personality disorder, trauma history, self-harm and suicidal behaviour, and the other on the treatment of borderline personality disorder.


Project Air Strategy have developed and made available four new treatment manuals:


**NEW CLINICAL TOOL AVAILABLE**


**PARENTING WITH PERSONALITY DISORDER AND COMPLEX MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

A One Day Skills training workshop – Parenting with Personality Disorder and Complex Mental Health Issues was held in Sydney in October 2018 for around 100 clinicians working with parents with complex mental health issues (including personality disorder and trauma history) and difficulties with affect, identity and relationships.

Kayla Steele, Anne Sved-Williams, Professor Brin Grenyer and Dr Ely Marceau celebrate a new parenting resource for young children “meltdown moments” by Professor Sved-Williams and colleagues.
NSW Mental Health Commission supports Project Air to co-design consumer and carer factsheets

The ‘Lived experience perspective of personality disorder services in NSW Project’ explored the perspectives of individuals with a lived experience of personality disorder and their families, carers and other kinship supports on their experience of mental health services. The primary purpose of the project was to allow the voices of individuals with lived experience to be heard and understood by service leaders, managers and clinicians, with regard to the provision of services.

Participants in the focus groups were individuals with a lived experience of personality disorder and carers, family, and kinship supports. Participation was promoted through various lived experience and carer groups, such as the Australian BPD Foundation and Mental Health Carers NSW (MHCN). In focus group discussions, participants provided their perspectives of mental health services through verbal and written communication.

The Lived Experience Framework highlights the importance of recognising the value of lived experience in mental health service delivery and design. The project captured the perspectives of individuals with a lived experience of personality disorder, and their families, carers and kinship supports, and used the information to develop resources to feed this information back to mental health services and staff.

All data obtained from the focus groups was qualitatively analysed by the Research Team, and several main themes emerged. These included issues surrounding diagnosis, carers requiring greater levels of support and understanding from services, and levels of support and compassionate care provided by the various services that individuals with personality disorder come into contact with.

These main themes informed 5 factsheets for mental health services and individuals with lived experience.

1. Giving a diagnosis of personality disorder: A guide for mental health professionals
2. Supporting carers: A guide for health professionals
3. Getting a diagnosis of personality disorder: What you need to know
4. Providing support for personality disorders: Guide for first responders and health professionals working in the hospital setting
5. Providing compassionate, recovery-oriented care: Guide for mental health professionals

The project will also inform a peer review journal article to allow wider reach, nationally and internationally.
In the media – a selected list of recent stories on personality disorders


**International prize** at the Institute of Mental Health Nottingham, UK Research Day May 2019. First poster prize for “Recovery in Borderline Personality Disorder: A qualitative study of stages and processes” by Fiona Ng, Michelle Townsend, Caitlin Miller, Mahlie Jewell, Brin Grenyer.

**Publication recognised for impact and contribution to advancement**

In June 2019 publisher, Wiley advised that Clinician attitudes towards borderline personality disorder: A 15-year comparison, published in Personality and Mental Health, is one of the journal’s top downloaded recent papers. Amongst articles published between January 2017 and December 2018, this paper received some of the most downloads in the 12 months following online publication, and generated immediate impact and visibility, contributing significantly to the advancement of our field.

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**PROJECT AIR STRATEGY TEAM**

**INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION**

American Psychological Association - Division 29 Society for the Advancement of Psychotherapy - Inaugural Jeremy Safran Memorial outstanding poster award, to Professor Brin Grenyer, Kate Lewis, Mahnaz Fanaian, Beth Kotze and Project Air Strategy Team “Integrative psychotherapy for personality disorder: a stepped care randomised controlled trial” presented by Nancy Murdock APA Div 29 President at the 35th Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration meeting, Lisbon Portugal June 2019.

Fiona Ng at the Institute of Mental Health UK

Professor Brin Grenyer with Nancy Murdock (APA Division 29 President)

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The Project Air Strategy acknowledges the major support of NSW Ministry of Health. It is an internationally recognised leader in research, education and treatment that partners with health, justice, communities, schools, families and individuals. A major goal is to bring new scientific discoveries to promote recovery.

Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders
Northfields Clinic - Building 22
University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia
email: info-projectair@uow.edu.au
website: www.projectairstrategy.org