

FEMAP NEWSLETTER



FEMAP TEAM (First Episode Mood and Anxiety Program): Elizabeth Osuch, M.D. FRCPC; Robyn Bluhm, PhD.; Melody Chow, Research Assistant; Jo Anne De Pace, Research Coordinator; Jennifer Scott, Administrative Assistant

Program Development

The FEMAP team is growing. A psychologist has been interviewed and may be offered a position within the program. Filling this position will be a great asset to both the clinical and research components of FEMAP. The tentative start date, pending final offer and acceptance is September 2007. We look forward to the possibility of having a new clinical and research team member.

Jean Kim, a UWO student, is volunteering with FEMAP this summer. Jean is supporting the staff in ongoing research activities. Thanks Jean!

In order to better suit FEMAP's adolescent and young adult population, we hope to eventually be housed in the community. The new location needs to be easily accessible and non-intimidating to clients. Close proximity to Lawson Research Institute and Robarts Research Institute is necessary to ensure accessibility to neuroimaging facilities for current and future research. FEMAP is currently housed on the 10th floor of the University Hospital.

There continues to be good support for the development of FEMAP and progress is being made monthly. This newsletter is to ensure that stakeholders are aware of progress now that the Task Force has completed its work.

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Clinical & Outreach

Linkages with the Child and Adolescent Centre, Adult Ambulatory Coordinated Intake, Emergency departments, the Mental Health Urgent Clinic within LHSC, Regional Mental Health Care and Mental Health Crisis Service are growing. These efforts are to better serve youth by appropriate and seamless referrals and to ensure that services are not replicated. The addition of a psychiatry resident into FEMAP has facilitated some of these linkages, especially with the Emergency Department. FEMAP is collaborating with Fanshawe College, the Thames Valley District School Board, the London Catholic District School Board, the Canadian Mental Health Association and Student Development Centre and Student Health Services at UWO. Patients are regularly being referred to both the research and the clinical program. Wait times are still less than two weeks.

Patients are being enrolled in the clinical Program at a rate of 1-4 per week. Most of these individuals have mood symptoms that bring them in. Most also have concurrent substance use problems. This has reinforced the goal of eventually hiring a clinical social worker who is trained in matters related to concurrent disorders.

Students/Graduate and Post Graduate Programs

The training of psychiatrists, psychologists and neuroscientists is an integral part of FEMAP. As FEMAP grows, the teaching components will include:

- Outpatient clinical placements and clinical research electives within FEMAP for Family Practice and Psychiatry residents
- Psychology outpatient clinical placements and research electives for graduate students and interns in the Department of Psychology, UWO
- Social Work outpatient clinical placements
- Graduate student electives in Epidemiology, Medical Biophysics, and etc., as there is interest

Currently, psychiatric residents have started rotations with FEMAP. The rest of this calendar year and into 2008 has been spoken for by the residents. This provides the program the opportunity to advance our clinical treatment and enriching the environment with young, inquiring minds seeking to learn how to provide excellent clinical care in this outpatient setting. As additional multidisciplinary staff members join the FEMAP team, we will be accepting students from a variety of graduate and post-graduate programs. Since FEMAP is unique in its outpatient emphasis for late adolescents and young adults it is likely to be a popular site for clinical as well as research trainees to rotate.

Research

FEMAP is developing a substantial research team. FEMAP researchers are already involved in projects on functional neuroimaging in depression and self-injurious behavior, mechanisms of affect regulation in mood disorders, exercise as a treatment of depression, and web-based approaches to stigma reduction for youth with symptoms of mental illness.

The neuroimaging projects have currently been funded by small grants that are supporting the collection of pilot data. One such project has recently been completed. In the fall of 2007, a proposal for a large neuroimaging project will be submitted to Canadian Institute for Health Research. A letter of intent for another neuroimaging project application has been submitted to the EJLB Foundation.

A proposal has been submitted to the Lawson Health Research Institute for the web-based initiative. This study will investigate the extent to which a web game within the mindyourmind.ca web site will affect stigma about mental illnesses.

A study of exercise as a treatment for depression is underway, led by a student in the Department of Kinesiology. This study will be wrapping up in the late summer.

Affect regulation studies have been implemented by Dr. Derek Mitchell and are currently underway. These investigate the functional brain differences in affect regulation and neurocognitive processing in depression, bipolar disorder and related conditions.

The further development of FEMAP will ensure the continuation of these projects as well as the addition of health outcomes research, treatment trials with pharmaceuticals, psychotherapies and other bio-psycho-social interventions, and additional studies into the etiology and treatments of these disorders.

If you have any questions regarding FEMAP or would like to make a referral to the program please contact:
(519) 685-8500 ext. 32165