Skills Session – Week 1

Dr Michael Robertson
Central Clinical School
(RPAH)
Session 1 – Psychiatric History

Brief overview of the nature of the psychiatric history

- Types of settings
- Differences from medical interview
- Strategies for conducting interview
Key points

- What is this person describing?
- Are these experiences pathological given the setting?
- Is there a psychiatric disorder?
- Is there a risk posed by this situation?
Key question

- Why this person?
- Why this problem?
- Why now?
Teaching focus

- A mock interview with a patient in the postnatal setting
- Depressive symptoms
- Child not thriving (as issue of risk)
- Vague suicidal ideation
- Hint of perfectionist personality style
Session 2 – The MSE

- Establish basic philosophical preconditions
  - The existence of “mental states” as observable phenomena
  - The hermeneutic element
  - Contextualisation
  - Cultural relativism
Session 2 – The MSE

- Large amount of content so lecture notes provided for students
- Emphasis on psychotic features in this lecture
- Focus upon what constitutes a proper cognitive assessment beyond the MMSE
Teaching Focus

- Scene from the Hollywood film “She’s So Lovely” featuring Sean Penn in a florid manic state
Session 3 – Psychiatric Emergencies

- Three scenarios of psychiatric emergencies encountered in the ED
  - Assessment of a patient post serious overdose
  - Medical emergency related to psychotropic medications
  - Acutely disturbed aggressive patient
- Suicide covered in detail in another lecture
Assessment of suicidal patient

Key Skill(s) – Assessment of suicidal risk

- Planned, deliberate overdose
- Patient with a number of demographic risk variables
- Depressed
- Little social support
- Ambivalence regarding survival
- Previous serious suicide attempt
Medical emergency

Key Skills – Awareness of psychotropic drug interactions; maintenance of clinical perspective with difficult patient

- Middle aged patient with chronic pain syndrome – frequent presenter to ED related to drug seeking
- Tramadol + SSRI + Olanzapine
- Presentation predominantly behaviourally disturbed but evidence of serotonin syndrome
Acutely dangerous patient

Key Skills – Anticipation of violence, safe restraint and medical management of a disturbed patient

- Young male
- Intoxicated with “ice”
- Emphasis on warning signs of imminent aggression
- Discussion of various restraint and sedation options