UPDATE FROM THE CACAP EXECUTIVE

Jennifer Russel, MD, FRCPC, Secretary, CACAP

As summer approaches here in Vancouver, I am excited to provide my first update as Secretary of the CACAP, especially as there is so much to highlight in our field.

Since our last update, in April 2023, the Senate passed B-S-210, the “Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act”, sending the legislation to the House of Commons, where it will be sponsored by M.P. Karen Vecchio (1). According to a notice from Vecchio’s office, the passage of Bill S-210 marks “the most significant progress in Canadian history for legislation designed to prevent children from accessing pornographic content online.” This Bill will address some of the real harms associated with exposure to pornography at an early age. The notice further highlighted that a brief provided by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection identified research of multiple harmful impacts on children who are exposed to pornography including “difficulty forming healthy relationships; harmful sexual beliefs and behaviours, a distorted belief that women and girls are always sexually available, harmful attitudes and beliefs regarding sexual consent and a normalization of sexual harm.”

With an eye to advocacy, we would like to understand the current state of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) workforce on several levels. Dr. Claire De Souza and colleagues (Drs. Sabina Abidi, Lia Amirali, Alexa Bagnell, Jana Davidson and Raj Rasasingham) are leading a physician workforce survey. The results from this survey will be used to advocate for our CAP workforce in Canada to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of our patients and their families.

We continue to work closely with our key partners, especially the Canadian Pediatric Society to further understand the impact of Covid on our patients. One recent interesting paper by Madigan et al. (2023) explores some of these changes (2). Key highlights include increases in depression symptoms during the pandemic, as well as strong evidence that anxiety symptoms increased slightly during the pandemic.

Our 43rd Annual conference is coming up in Calgary this year (Sept 9-12). The theme is “Understanding Complexity in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: New approaches to addressing heterogeneity in presentation and care.” Although we are excited to see everyone in person, as an academy, we want to keep some of the “gifts of COVID” including a hybrid conference option to continue to increase access to education. Following the mentorship survey, we are hosting the first “Mentorship across the Lifespan” event at our conference in Calgary. Led by Drs. Jamil Jivraj, Alexandra Manning, and Nikhita Singhal, this will be a chance to learn from each other about the importance of mentorship throughout various stages of one’s career through to retirement, with a lens of how CACAP can support mentorship across Canada. Please book your accommodations soon!

References
