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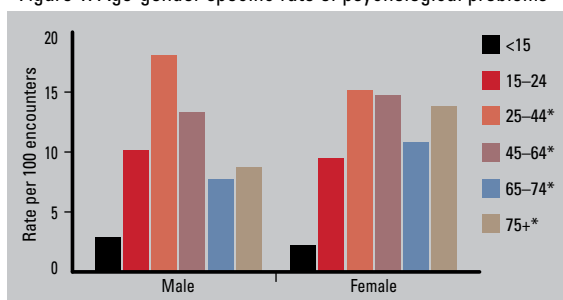
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Men and mental health

In the BEACH program between April 2006 and March 2008, there were 7841 encounters with male patients involving the management of 8444 psychological problems (psychological encounters). We investigate the content of these encounters in comparison with the 13 141 female 'psychological encounters' which involved the management of 13 888 psychological problems.

Figure 1. Age-gender specific rate of psychological problems



* Significantly different

Table 1. Most common psychological problems managed at BEACH encounters with male patients, 2006–2008

Psychological problem	Rate per 100 male encounters (n=76 073)	Annual estimated contacts with GPs*
Depression	3.3	1 415 000
Insomnia	1.5	630 000
Anxiety	1.4	600 000
Schizophrenia	0.6	260 000
Drug abuse	0.6	250 000
Tobacco abuse	0.5	210 000
Acute stress reaction	0.5	210 000
Chronic alcohol abuse	0.4	180 000
Dementia	0.4	160 000
Post-traumatic stress disorder	0.2	100 000
All psychological problems	11.1	4 780 000

* Number of annual estimated national GP contacts

■ Psychological problems were managed at a rate of 11.1 per 100 encounters with male patients in 2006–2008, compared with 12.6 per 100 female encounters. Two-thirds of these encounters were with males aged 45–64 years (34.5%) and 25–44 years (32.9%). Age specific rates show that psychological problems were managed most often among males aged 25–44 years (18.1 per 100 encounters with males in this age group) significantly higher than the equivalent group of females (Figure 1).

Male patients at 'psychological encounters' were significantly more likely to be new to the practice (7.1%) than were females (5.6%). The most common psychological problem managed at encounters with male patients was depression, at 3.3 per 100 male encounters, extrapolated to 1.4 million contacts in general practice nationally. Insomnia, anxiety and schizophrenia were also common (Table 1).

Males were managed significantly more often for schizophrenia, drug abuse, tobacco abuse, chronic alcohol abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder; and significantly less often for depression, anxiety and acute stress reaction, than were females.

In general, men are more likely to have only one problem managed per general practice encounter than women.¹ This is also the case with psychological encounters, at 40.5% of male encounters the psychological problem was the only problem managed. These encounters were significantly shorter (17.8 minutes) than for females (19.4 minutes).

Conflict of interest: none declared.

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Reference

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