A Practical and Holistic Approach to Pediatric Mental Health

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As I continue in this role as interim Editor-in-Chief of Pediatric Annals, I have the opportunity to learn more about new approaches to the diagnosis and management of general pediatric clinical problems. In this issue, guest editor Dr. William P. French and his team of experts present an impressively written group of articles about aspects of pediatric mental health and the integral role of the primary care pediatrician in the care of these patients and their families.

My role in clinical practice as it related to mental health has primarily been in intensive care. In my experiences, once a patient’s acute clinical issues improved, be it a new diagnosis of diabetes, an exacerbation of a chronic illness like asthma or cystic fibrosis, or a suicide attempt, the psychological aspects of the illnesses and the patient’s continued care is then managed by a pediatric team in the hospital and, most importantly, after discharge.

I think you will find each of these articles, from diagnosis and management of generalized anxiety disorder, pediatric bipolar disorder and its variations to psychosocial management of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder with and without medication, to be applicable to your general pediatric practice. The article about the mental health of children in foster care is also insightful. A significant theme presented throughout the articles is the importance of psychoeducation; adequately informing caregivers and patients about their clinical problems is a vital aspect of health care management.

This issue’s Feature article “A Brief Mindfulness Intervention for Residents: Relevance for Pediatricians,” by Drs. Mallory Taylor, Melanie Brown, and myself, explores mindfulness intervention, which is a method that seeks to address burnout among clinicians. I would like to acknowledge a mentor of mine, Dr. David Victorson (Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Evanston, IL) who was instrumental in my education about mindfulness, mindful meditation, and aspects of body scanning and guided imagery.

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