

Message from the Board

The Board wish you a Happy New Year and hope that you had a good festive season.

We wish to inform you that Mental Health Aberdeen (MHA), from whom we rent our office, is having to relocate the Alford Centre at the end of March. If you have any queries about the Alford centre please phone them on 01224 573 188

As a result, we are busy searching for a new office to allow us to continue our service. This may result in the temporary closure of the Drop-in Centre for a while, but rest assured we are doing everything possible to prevent this from happening.

All is not lost as we can confirm that the Helpline and E-Mail service will continue to operate as normal and will not be affected by the office closure.

We will keep you advised of this situation.

Office News

The office is open again for business as usual. Monday from 10am – 4pm Thursday from 1pm – 4pm and Friday from 10am – 4pm. We hope that you all had a good festive season and have recovered from any excess.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy new year and we hope that 2010 is a good year for you all of you.

Mental health charity launches jury campaign

A mental health charity has launched a campaign to make people with mental health problems eligible for jury service, with the support of the Criminal Bar Association.

[Charity Rethink](#) said the UK is one of only two jurisdictions in the English-speaking world that excludes people who have recovered from a mental illness from serving on juries.

It claims 750 people a month are disqualified from UK jury service on mental health grounds. These include people who have recovered from mental illness but still 'regularly attend for treatment by a medical practitioner'.

Other English-speaking jurisdictions, with the exception of Quebec, in Canada, only exclude people who do not have the capacity to sit on a jury, irrespective of whether they require continued medical support, the charity says.

The campaign, which will lobby the government to change the criteria for jury eligibility, is also supported by broadcaster Stephen Fry, who suffers from bipolar disorder.

Richard Charlton, chairman of the Mental Health Lawyers Association, said a disproportionate number of people with mental health problems appeared before juries.

'If juries are to reflect a cross-section of society, then people with a mental health history should sit on them. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 defines capacity. Let's use it.'

A spokesman for the Ministry of Justice said it was 'keeping under review' the possibility of using the Mental Capacity Act as a guide to a juror's suitability.

Law Society Gazette

Did you Know ?

Sugar helps fight stress according to a United States study. Rats given a sugar solution produced less of a stress-related hormone when deprived of oxygen than those on water.

New gene found for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder

Researchers at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR), in collaboration with scientists from the University of Edinburgh, have found a new gene that is linked to schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

The gene, called ABCA13, is active in the hippocampus and cortex regions of the brain and had not previously been associated with mental illness.

Dr Allan McRae from QIMR's Queensland Statistic Genetics Laboratory says the discovery of the gene was a lucky break.

"We did a genetic analysis on a patient with chronic schizophrenia and discovered he had a break in his DNA, right in the middle of the ABCA13 gene. The break meant that the gene wouldn't work properly, so we hypothesised that this might be the reason for their illness," said Dr McRae.

"We tested this theory in another 3,000 people, by examining this gene in schizophrenia, bipolar and depression patients and comparing it to people without these conditions."

They found that ABCA13 gene was linked to people with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

"We found that the gene was involved in 4% of individuals with bipolar and 2% of people with schizophrenia," said Dr McRae. "This is quite significant, since we think that these disorders are caused by hundreds or even thousands of genes."

This research can lead to better diagnosis of mental illness risk, and early intervention and treatment. The involvement of this particular gene also furthers our understanding of the mechanisms of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder development.

This study was published in The American Journal of Human Genetics.

Combination Therapy

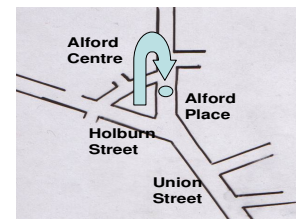
People with bipolar disorder are less likely to suffer a relapse if they take both lithium and sodium valproate rather than the drug valproate alone, an Oxford University study claims.

Sodium valproate (available as Depakote) has been increasingly prescribed over lithium (Priadel) as a long—

term therapy for bipolar disorder, particularly in North America.

But the findings of the randomized trial, published in the medical journal 'The Lancet', suggest that those who have been prescribed valproate would fare better if lithium was added to their therapy, or if they changed to lithium alone.

How to find us



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