

101.00

## HOW DO ADULT HEALTH PROBLEMS IMPACT ON CHILDREN? HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW?

H. Heussler<sup>1,2</sup>, L. Polnay<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Mater Children's Hospital, Brisbane, Australia* <sup>2</sup>*University of Nottingham, UK*  
[honey.heussler@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:honey.heussler@nottingham.ac.uk)

In the UK, almost three million children under the age of 16 (23% of all children) live in households where one family member is hampered in daily activities by any chronic mental or physical disability or illness.

These children have limited opportunities for educational, social and leisure activities, as well as limited horizons and aspirations. They are subject to lack of understanding from peers, restricted friendships as well as “stigma by association” especially where the parents have mental health or substance abuse problems. They have a higher incidence of emotional difficulties, health problems and difficulties in child-adult transitions. This is often compounded by a fear of professionals and a code of “silence and secrets”.

Recognition of these difficulties by all health professionals is imperative in identifying this often under-recognised group of vulnerable children. This involves training of all health professionals involved with families and liaison systems to enable timely and appropriate support for the child.

Specialist projects to provide these needs are one way of helping these children. A review of practice including a number of models and examples of good practice in the United Kingdom will be discussed including- parents with disabilities/ mental health problems/ HIV family clinics/ substance abuse.

Service delivery should have a family focus starting from identification of the adult with the problem and pre-empting support that the family/ child will require in a multi-disciplinary manner.

