In a recent discussion with a group of GP’s in a PARTY partner clinic in the western suburbs the question of finding good mental health practitioners for referral was raised. The GP’s related that they were concerned at the scarcity of Psychiatrists practicing in their area; and also that they weren’t confident that they knew all of the resources available to them and their patients. In particular they were concerned that they didn’t have a full list of Psychiatrists working with young people in their area.

Some time ago, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists published a list of Psychiatrists and their specialities which some of the GP’s participating in PARTY have found to be very useful. The PARTY team undertook to find out whether the list still existed and whether an updated version could be found.

Online ‘Find a Psychiatrist’ Directory for GP’s
We were pleased to discover that in fact, the list has evolved and is now an online directory service available to GP’s. The database is developed and maintained as a joint initiative of the RACGP and the RANZCP. To access the database you will need your RACGP member login credentials. Browse to http://www.racgp.org.au/psychiatristdatabase.

Once you have logged in, you will see 4 tabs displayed at the top of the page. Select “Advanced Search” you can select the state – Victoria, the areas of interest – e.g. child and adolescent, and the type of referral – e.g. GP telephone consultation, or 1-2 assessment visit. Leave the other fields with their default values then start your search.

If you don’t have member access to the RACGP website, the RANZCP offer a related search tool available to lay people. You can find a link to this tool prominently displayed on their home page, or use this link http://www.ranzcp.org/Resources/find-a-psychiatrist.aspx.

Secondary Consultations
Many of these psychiatrists are also available for a one off secondary consultation to provide advice to the GP over issues such as whether or what medication is indicated for an adolescent mental health disorder.

Psychologists too.
A similar database is maintained by the Australian Psychological Society and can be used to find a psychologist. This list may not be as ubiquitous because unlike psychiatrists, psychologists have to opt-in and pay a fee to be included in the directory. Despite this, it may be a useful resource for you anyway. You can find a link on the APS homepage, or access the database directly through http://www.psychology.org.au/findapsychologist/

If you have a good story to tell please let us know the ways you have found to identify specialist adolescent Mental Health providers to improve the support you offer to young people.

References.