

New centre for ambulatory crisis treatment for adolescents established by the HUG (University Hospitals of Geneva) thanks to the CHILDREN ACTION Foundation

Geneva, April 1st 2008 - Destined to welcome young people aged 16 to 21, the Centre for Ambulatory Intensive Treatment (CATI) was launched today at 20 avenue Beau-Séjour, thanks to a major financial contribution from the CHILDREN ACTION Foundation. Rounding out Geneva's facilities for the prevention and hospital treatment of crises associated with suicidal tendencies in adolescents, this new service will provide urgent ambulatory care as well as follow-up support for 8 to 12 weeks. Offering an alternative to hospitalisation, the Centre enables the pursuit of educational or professional activities during the treatment period. Established in 1996 by the HUG and generously supported by the CHILDREN ACTION Foundation, the hospital crisis unit for suicidal adolescents and the Centre for the Study and Prevention of Suicide will henceforth be supplemented by an ambulatory care plank, guaranteeing the monitoring of troubled adolescents in the longer term. This combined offering (prevention, ambulatory care, hospital treatment) is emerging as a university centre of excellence and a benchmark in Europe.

An additional link in the treatment of adolescents in crisis

Open 7 days a week and equipped to monitor up to 30 teenagers at a time, the Centre for Ambulatory Intensive Treatment (CATI) aims to round out facilities for the prevention and hospital treatment of suicide which have existed in Geneva for 10 years, namely:

- the Centre for the Study and Prevention of Suicide (CEPS), focused on clinical and research activities, which makes available to patients, relatives and professionals a 24x7 help line
- a specialised unit (UCA), located at 57 boulevard de la Cluse, catering for hospitalised management of suicidal adolescents. A total of 2348 patients have been evaluated by the UCA, of which 1220 were hospitalised and the remaining 1128 referred to the children's and adolescent psychiatric service for ambulatory follow-up.

What intensive treatments to suggest at the end of a hospital stay? How to convince a young person refusing hospitalisation to adhere to a specific medium to long-term management plan? The new Centre addresses these two quandaries by offering, on a voluntary undertaking basis, an intensive ambulatory management plan comprising exchanges with medical/ nursing professionals, group activities, individual corporal mediation therapy, art therapy and psychotherapy. Other options include spending a maximum of two nights at the Centre and the availability of patient support or family-level management plans.

Continuing financial support from the CHILDREN ACTION Foundation

Concerned with the protection of childhood interests and humanitarian work, the CHILDREN ACTION Foundation has contributed significant financial support to the HUG's Children's and Adolescent Psychiatric Services (SPEA) for over 10 years. Pursuing its financial efforts in favour of adolescents (with CHF 5,693,000 donated from October 1996 to December 2007), the CHILDREN ACTION Foundation will contribute to the new Centre's administration costs to the tune of CHF 1,100,000 per annum.

Problematical access to treatment

A new partnering agreement incorporating the new Centre's activities has been entered into by the HUG and the CHILDREN ACTION Foundation. This programme expansion will allow for the optimal management of young people in crisis and improved access to treatment options for an at-risk group which rarely consults with others. Approximately 4% of girls and 5% of boys aged between 15 and 25 are at risk of undertaking a suicidal act. Only 10% of those young people are monitored because most adolescents with psychological problems refuse to establish direct contact with specialists.

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