

## REFERENCES

- 1 **National Statistics Institute (INE)**. <http://atrios.ine.es/censo/es/inicio> (accessed 14 Oct 2005).
- 2 **National Statistics Institute (INE)**. <http://www.ine.es> (accessed 26 Oct 2005).
- 3 Real Decreto 2393/2004 de 30 de diciembre, Ley orgánica 4/2000 de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España (BOE number 6-323).
- 4 **Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (MTAS)**. Occupational injury statistics 2003. [http://www.mtas.es/insht/statistics/est\\_BEL.htm](http://www.mtas.es/insht/statistics/est_BEL.htm) (original database obtained by permission for the study).
- 5 **Ministry of Labour and Social Issues**. <http://www.mtas.es/estadisticas/anuario> (accessed 14 Oct 2005).
- 6 **Richardson DB**, Loomis D, Bena J, et al. Fatal occupational injury rates in Southern and non-Southern states, by race and Hispanic ethnicity. *Am J Public Health* 2004;**94**:1756-61.
- 7 **Dong X**, Platner JW. Occupational fatalities of Hispanic construction workers from 1992 to 2000. *Am J Ind Med* 2004;**45**:45-50.
- 8 **Bollini P**, Siem H. No real progress towards equity: health of migrants and ethnic minorities on the eve of the year 2000. *Soc Sci Med* 1995;**41**:819-28.
- 9 **Corvalan CF**, Driscoll TR, Harrison JE. Role of migrant factors in work-related fatalities in Australia. *Scand J Work Environ Health* 1994;**20**:364-70.

## THE JECH GALLERY

## Young adults' reluctance to seek help and use medications for mental distress

Epidemiological data suggest young adults are a group least likely to seek help when suffering from mental disorder.<sup>1</sup> This is of public health concern in the context of high rates of suicide and deliberate self harm among this age group.<sup>2</sup> In a recent cross sectional survey of mental distress and help seeking in young adults aged 16-24 years,<sup>3</sup> we found fewer than 10% of respondents with probable mental disorder<sup>4</sup> had recently consulted a GP. The picture was drawn on a questionnaire returned as part of this survey by a young woman reporting severe symptoms and a suicide attempt. She described her experiences of seeking help as: "tried to speak to people, got passed around, got drugged", and was trying to self manage her symptoms, having withdrawn from medical services. In common with other respondents, her reluctance to seek help was in part motivated by a strong desire to avoid medication. Her picture was accompanied by the message: "For anyone whose job it is to help others, genuine heartfelt compassion, empathy, sympathy are needed along with the ability to not just hear but *really listen*....don't just prescribe pills as if it were eenie, meenie, minee mo, which pill shall we give a go?" Such data contribute a lay perspective to debates about drug treatments for depression and the need to reduce their use in young people.<sup>5</sup>

Lucy Biddle, David Gunnell, Jenny Donovan  
Department of Social Medicine, University of  
Bristol, Bristol, UK  
Debbie Sharp  
Division of Primary Care, University of Bristol

Correspondence to: Dr L Biddle, Department  
Social Medicine, University of Bristol, Canynge  
Hall, Whiteladies Road, Bristol BS8 2PR, UK;  
[Lucy.Biddle@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Lucy.Biddle@bristol.ac.uk)

## REFERENCES

- 1 **Bebbington P**, Meltzer H, Brugha T, et al. Unequal access and unmet need: neurotic disorders and the use of primary care services. *Psychol Med* 2000;**30**:1359-67.
- 2 **Department of Health**. National suicide prevention strategy for England. London: Department of Health, 2002.
- 3 **Biddle L**, Gunnell D, Sharp D, et al. Factors influencing help-seeking in mentally distressed young adults: a cross-sectional survey. *Br J Gen Pract* 2004;**54**:248-53.
- 4 **Goldberg D**, Williams P. A user's guide to the general health questionnaire. Berkshire: NFER-Nelson, 1988.
- 5 **Ramchandani P**. Treatment of major depressive disorder in children and adolescents. *BMJ* 2004;**328**:3-4.

