Safeguarding

NHS
Lincolnshire
Integrated Care Board

7 Minute Briefing – Perplexing Presentations (PP) / Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)

1. What is it?

Perplexing Presentations (PP) describes when there are alerting signs of possible FII when the state of the child's physical, mental health and neurodevelopment is not yet clear but there is no perceived risk of immediate serious harm to the child's physical health or life.

2. Most children found to have FII are initially recognised as perplexing presentations BUT not all PP are FII.

FII is a situation where a child is (or is very likely to be) harmed due to parent(s) behaviour and actions. FII results in physical and emotional abuse and neglect.

3. Why? In more than 90% of cases, mum is the perpetrator. FII is based on a need for their child to be recognised and treated as ill or more unwell/disabled than the child actually is.

There may be a gain (attention or financial) for the parent or the parent may have erroneous beliefs with extreme concern and anxiety.

4. Alerting signs.

In the child these include symptoms and signs not seen independently by others, unexplained poor response to treatment and unexplained impairment of daily living eg school.

Parents may repeatedly report new symptoms and repeatedly present to healthcare settings and seek multiple medical opinions.

5. What to do?

If there are concerns about PP or FII, the GP should refer to a paediatrician or child psychiatrist with expertise in signs and symptoms that are being presented.

If there is immediate serious risk to the child's health or lie, an urgent referral must be made to the police and children's social care.

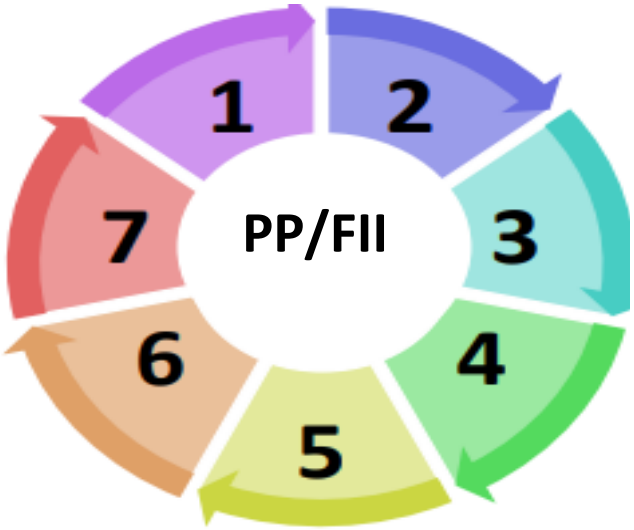
6. GPs should also discuss with the practice safeguarding lead and/or the Designated Doctor or Nurse.

GPs must remember they have a duty to share any relevant or proportionate information that may impact on the welfare of a child and that may keep that child safe from harm.

7. Links:

LSCP policy is at Fabricated or Induced Illness/Perplexing Presentations

RCPCH guidance: Perplexing-Presentations-FII-Guidance RCI



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