

## **Maria, 46 years Admission**

Maria is a 46-year-old woman who presented to her GP complaining of feeling “nervous” and “depressed”. Her GP has referred her to the community mental health team for specialist support. Maria has been depressed for the past month, she has had trouble getting off to sleep and has been waking early in the morning around 4am. She says she finds this distressing, “but there is nothing I can do about it”.

Over the last couple of weeks Maria has begun to wander the house and wakes her daughter seeking support and reassurance. Maria’s daughter finds being woken very disruptive. Maria’s appetite has been poor recently but no evidence of weight loss. She says that she has been having difficulty concentrating and sometimes forgets things. There is no evidence of cognitive problems on formal examination. She says that she thinks about “ending it all” but denies that she would do anything to hurt herself.

Maria has three children, Theresa 19, Lillian 17 and Thomas 10. Two of Maria’s three children live at home with her and her husband. Maria’s eldest child, Theresa, moved out recently to study at university. Her daughter, Lillian, is caring for her youngest son, Thomas. Maria’s daughter, Lillian, says that Maria and her father Joe haven’t been getting on lately. Joe goes to a friend’s house and that “upsets mum”. Maria says that she doesn’t like drinking alcohol and that sometimes when Joe has been drinking they argue and he threatens to hit her. But Maria says that he is a “good husband” and a “good provider” and they have no financial difficulties.

Maria has been unemployed for the last 6 months after the plastics factory at which she worked closed down. She received good references on retrenchment and she has been offered alternative employment by friends but has declined these offers. Maria usually participates in a variety of social and church activities within the Italian community, although her participation has almost stopped in recent weeks. Maria still attends Mass each week, but her daughter says that she doesn’t engage in her usual discussions with friends after Mass and leaves almost immediately. Maria is still able to undertake household duties however Lillian indicates that, although Maria is an excellent housekeeper, but that she isn’t keeping the house as tidy as she used to.