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World Psychiatric Association Transcultural Psychiatry Section

Annual Report 2024

1. Board Meetings

The World Psychiatric Association Transcultural Psychiatry Section (WPA TPS) Board meets regularly at the annual meetings of the WPA and, periodically, on Zoom meetings and, in addition, has regular communication via email and other platforms.

2. Webinars

The Section has had three webinars during 2024. All the section members were invited to the webinars, which were also an opportunity for the Section members to meet in between World Congress of Psychiatry Meetings in person.

The following webinars were held in 2024:

1. What is cultural competence? Professor Kamaldeep Bhui.

Tuesday, March 5th 14.00 - 15.30 UT (15.00 - 16.30 CET), digitally via Teams

Summary: Drawing on studies of ethnic inequalities in the experience and outcomes of severe mental illnesses, Professor Bhui describes some of the key elements of cultural competence, using case studies including the specific case of coercion and compulsory detention and treatment under the powers of legislation. At the heart of reform, lived experience data hold evidence on which we can act and by which we can assess the impact of our practice and policy interventions. Taking a clinical, cultural, and anti-racist perspective the presentation will explore how practitioners, policy makers, commissioners and managers must consider and act on a more eco-socio-cultural, historical, and syndemic approach to overcome epistemic injustice in care systems. This is difficult emotionally demanding work and requires collaborative and emotionally intelligent leadership and kindness to overcome historical and contemporary obstacles.

Our speaker, Kamaldeep Bhui CBE is Professor of Psychiatry, University of Oxford and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist at East London NHS FT and Oxford Health NHS FT. He leads the CHIMES Collaborative at University of Oxford, integrating creative arts, social sciences, psychiatric, and lived experience perspectives in mental health care and research. He is currently investigating the role of adverse childhood experiences in mental health trajectories, experience-based methods to co-design interventions to reduce the use of the mental health act, and the complex systems and syndemic drivers of multiple morbidities in psychoses. He is a Trustee at Centre for Mental Health and ThinkAhead, and a clinical academic advisor to UKHSA. He is the former Public Health Lead and Chair of the Publications Management Board at Royal College of Psychiatrists, and former Editor in Chief of the British Journal of Psychiatry.

2. Cultural responsiveness in psychiatry: Clinical ethnography of Suicide, Abnormal Grief Reaction, and Intimate Partner Violence. Professor Maurice Eisenbruch.

June 5th 2024 at 5.00 AM Melbourne, Australia time

Summary: Psychiatry faces continuing challenges meeting the call for cultural responsiveness in a global world. Recent attempts have been made to achieve “cultural responsiveness” through initiatives such as the Cultural Formulation Interview (CFI) of the DSM-5. In this webinar, Professor Eisenbruch demonstrated how, with the help of local religious and traditional healers, we can gain invaluable insights into the cultural construction of mental suffering and illness of local communities, insights often overlooked by western-trained psychiatrists. Professor Eisenbruch argued that the effectiveness of our rapport and interventions with asylum-seekers, refugees and others who have resettled in the global north can be enhanced by “going upstream”, in order to explore the cultural context of mental illness in their countries of origin. Drawing on his extensive clinical ethnographic experience gained in Cambodia between 1990-2024, Professor Eisenbruch presented case material on topics such as suicide, abnormal grief reaction, and intimate partner violence, and consider the implications for nosology, diagnosis and treatment in multicultural settings.

Our speaker, Professor Maurice Eisenbruch MD MPhil (Cambridge), MEdSt, DPM, FRAI, IDFAPA, FRCPsych, FRANZCP, CertChildAdolPsych, AFBPsS, MAPS, MACE, is a transcultural psychiatrist and medical anthropologist. He is Adjunct Professor at the Department of Psychiatry at Monash University and Honorary Professorial Fellow in Anthropology at the University of Melbourne, in Australia. He has worked at Harvard Medical School and the National Centre for Scientific Research in France, and has been a consultant with UNESCO, WHO, and UNFPA. He is an International Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and Co-Chair of the Transcultural Psychiatry Section of the World Psychiatric Association. Professor Eisenbruch is also a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and can work with patients in half a dozen languages.

3. Many faces of war: conceptualizing war trauma and PTSD. Goran Mijaljica.

Wednesday, October 23rd 2024 at 15.00 h CET (Central European Time)

Summary: War trauma can be considered a consequence of traumatic experiences faced during wartime, and can include many different types of events, such as loss, destruction, violence, torture, etc. However, studies report that even experiences such as lack of water, food or shelter have been experienced as traumatic by those who have lived in a conflict zone. Research shows that the prevalence rates of psychiatric conditions, such as depression, anxiety and PTSD are two to three times higher in persons exposed to armed conflict. This talk provided an overview of knowledge on war trauma, discuss different concepts of war trauma and PTSD, as well as reflected upon the cultural aspects of understanding the complexity of experiences during the times of war in patients seeking psychiatric treatment.

Our speaker, Goran Mijaljica, is a trained psychiatrist currently working at the Haukeland University Hospital in Bergen, Norway and the Transcultural Centre, Region Stockholm, Sweden. His clinical work involves psychiatric evaluation and treatment, as well as individual psychotherapy of, among others, patients with traumatic experiences related to war and torture. He has also trained other mental health professionals in trauma and PTSD at the regional and national level in Sweden and Norway. Goran is the Secretary of the WPA Transcultural Psychiatry Section and member of the WHO Research Ethics Committee.

4. Newsletter

The WPA TPS newsletter is an important part of the Section activities. Section members can contribute with different types of communications, such as articles, short communications, announcements, etc.

There were 4 Newsletter editions sent out to our members in 2024 (January, April, September and December edition).

The following articles were published in the newsletter in 2024:

- Review Article: Psychotherapy in the Arab World, Challenges and Chances

Authors: Mohamed Elsheikh, Mohamed Adwi, Seba Khalid

- Article: The concept of death among Mexicans. Author: Sergio J. Villaseñor-Bayardo
- Article: "Deepening the analysis of suicide from an ethnopsychiatric perspective".

Author: Marcos de Noronha

5. World Congress of Psychiatry 2024, Mexico City

Section Members and Board Members were actively participating at the WCP2024 as faculty members, presenters and chairpersons of different sessions.

The Section meeting took place on November 16th 2024.

Following Section Members were present at the Section Meeting at WCP2024:

Onsite: Eric Jarvis, Robert Kohn, Sonam Saxena, Xudong Zhao, Claudia Castellanos, Meryam Schouler – Ocak, Maurice Eisenbruch, Goran Mijaljica, Sergio Villaseñor Bayardo, Valbona Ticic – Prelevic, Renato Alarcón

Digitally: Samuel Okpaku, Laurence Kirmayer, Solmaz Golsabahi-Broclawski, Kateřina Duchoňová

The agenda and the summary of the meeting were as follows:

1. Introduction and summary of the activities the past year: Sergio Villaseñor Bayardo summarizes the activities of the section, including the webinars, newsletter, participation at the WCP 2024, where many of the section's members contributed actively.

2. New members: We have a growing membership and are happy to see an increasing interest in joining the section. The work revising the membership list is ongoing and all members will be asked them to confirm their status and update their contact information.

3. Newsletter: All the members of the section are invited to contribute to the webinar. We discussed the potential of the newsletter – for example as a platform which can be used to exchange of ideas, etc. We agree that members can be approached actively and asked to contribute to the newsletter.

4. Web page: We informed the members that the WPA TPS website will be moved to the main WPA website, as a part of our efforts to centralize the main functions of the section, including we bank account and website, and merge them with the WPA main ones.

5. Collaborative research proposals and activities: We discussed different ideas, such as the potential of developing research, looking for opportunities for funding, and similar. Some research areas of potential interest for the Section members that were mentioned were:

death, suicide, bereavement, etc. We plan to continue to exchange ideas during the upcoming year.

6. Update from the Transcultural Psychiatry Journal: Eric Jarvis, the Journal Editor gives the membership an update regarding the performance of the Journal. Professor Jarvis took over editorship of the Journal last year from Prof. Kirmayer, who is also a member of the Section. Last year the journal received 211 submissions this year, and there is a healthy interest in the field. The impact factor is 2,5. We discussed the possibility of having thematic issues, and motivating the members to contribute with individual submissions.

There is also an agreement in principle from 2009, stating that Transcultural Psychiatry is the official journal of the WPA TPS, however, the agreement needs to be reassessed.

The Section members contributed to this point by proposing points for continued collaboration. Professor Kirmayer reminded the members that up to 1 issue per year thematic could be prioritized for WPA TPS, which might be a practice worth continuing.

Prof. Villaseñor Bayardo proposes a thematic number for next year, and

Prof. Alarcón reaffirms his faith to contributing to world psychiatry in this period of uncertainty. Prof. Schouler – Ocaik suggests to prioritise topics such as climate change, wars and conflict – with a proposed special issue on climate change and migration and war/conflict and migration, including the fear of war.

Dr. Sonam Saxena discusses the issue of substance use amongst different cultures of India, and mentions that she would like to present it at an upcoming conference, and perhaps the Section publications, such as the Newsletter.

Professor Eisenbruch proposed that a commitment be made for the Section to create and disseminate a series of position statement. Examples include global alarm, climate change, etc. In addition, intersectional symposia would be a good way of shifting focus to some important issues.

7. Webinars in 2024 and plans for 2025: Section members are invited to contribute to upcoming webinars. We could also collaborate with others, e.g. other WPA sections and consider having shared webinars. Prof. Jarvis proposes to send out a questionnaire and ask the membership to suggest topics for upcoming webinars. There is also a proposal for developing regionally based webinars. It is envisaged that the an online library of webinars would be established.

8. Next World Congress of Psychiatry in Prague, 2025: We discussed the possibility of proposing intersectional symposia with other WPA Sections.

(This led to subsequent discussion after the Congress in Mexico and finally two symposia and one State of the Art Lecture were proposed, and one of these symposia was accepted by the Congress organisers).

It is important that we seek collaboration with other WPA sections, for example, WPA TPS + Psychotherapy Section and WPA TPS and Religion section and that the production of a joint proposal for symposia would be a useful first step

9. Section finances and changes regarding the membership fees and WPA TPS BANK account:

Robert Kohn presents the treasurers report. WPA TPS has 10 535,10 dollars available on the account. We are no longer receiving dues, and we are making arrangements to transfer the funds to the WPA main account.

10. Other: Proposed collaboration with the section on religion and mental disease.

6. WPA TPS Travel Stipend WCP2024

The WPA TPS Section offered two travel stipends to facilitate participation of medical students and early career psychiatrists with proven interest in transcultural psychiatry at the WPA Congress in Mexico City, 14-17 November 2024.

Applicants from countries listed as D and C were encouraged to apply, although we welcomed applications from around the globe. Each stipend amounted to 1200 USD, for funding participation fee, travel or accommodation in Mexico City during the conference. The recipients of the WPA TPS Travel Stipend 2024 are Dr Sonam Saxena, Psychiatry Resident Doctor from India, and Dr Claudia Castellanos, Early Career Psychiatrist from Mexico. The Section hopes to continue offering the stipend to Early Career Psychiatrists and Medical Students for upcoming conferences.

WPA TPS Board