



Newsletter of the Section of Old Age Psychiatry

January 2023 – April 2023

Here are some activities of the WPA-SOAP members between January and April 2023

I - Publications

The WPA Section of Old Age Psychiatry and the International Psychogeriatric Association seek to ensure that older persons with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities are not discriminated against based on their age, or their mental health or psychosocial disability status, and are treated as full citizens enjoying all rights on an equal basis with other citizens. As strategy to achieve this common goal both organizations are responding to several call for inputs made by United Nations agencies. Here are the recent documents produced.

1. *IPA and WPA-SOAP position statement on deprivation of liberty of older persons with mental health conditions.*
In recognition of the challenges faced by older persons deprived of their liberty, a Position Statement was published in 2022 that outlines the views of both organizations on this subject. Three contexts of deprivation of liberty were considered: deprivation of liberty of decision-making, deprivation of liberty within care settings and deprivation of liberty within detention facilities.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/w482atki9vy6315/Deprivation%20of%20liberty.pdf?dl=0>
2. *The right to education throughout the life course, advances and challenges: contribution of WPA-SOAP and IPA.*
The UN special rapporteur on the right to education made a call for input on January 2023 to his next report. In their input WPA-SOAP and IPA outlined the place of education in an ageing world and on how education can promote and preserve healthy aging and the health and wellbeing of older adults with mental health conditions.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/e1asmb54bnyrt/Education%20OAP.pdf?dl=0>
3. *General Discussion and call for written submissions on article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*
During its 28th session the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has held a day of general discussion on March 2023 with a focus on persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies. The WPA-SOAP and IPA input considered the situation of older adults during such emergencies.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/iyztlc9w65ug9rb/Humanitarian%20crisis%20%26%20OAP%20%2813.02.23%29.pdf?dl=0>
4. *13th Session. Open-ended Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons.*
The Chair of the General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons, invited to provide inputs on the two focus areas of the thirteenth session on April 2023: "Right to Health and Access to Health Services" and "Social Inclusion".
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/apxg4nrj8gikq4s/Right%20to%20health%20and%20Access%20to%20Health%20Services%20%2815.02.23%29.pdf?dl=0>
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/6ow63krxz4h1y1q/Social%20Inclusion.pdf?dl=0>
5. *Report on violence, abuse and neglect of older persons*
The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons will focus her next thematic report to the Human Rights Council in 2023 on violence, abuse and neglect of older persons. WPA-SOAP, IPA and Capacity Australia prepared the following text:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/y0y10f6e2xbq57y/Violence%2C%20neglect%20and%20abuse.pdf?dl=0>
6. *Older persons in climate change-induced hazards and building back better: IPA, WPA-SOAP, and NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva Position Statement.*

The UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons will focus her next thematic report to the 78th session of the General Assembly on “older persons in the context of climate change-induced disasters and building back better”. The following text is the contribution of the three organizations to this call for input.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5wrptnz38reuruj/Climate%20Change%20%26%20OAP%20%2801.05.23%29.pdf?dl=0>

II – Other relevant reports

1. [UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Leaving No One Behind In An Ageing World. World Social Report 2023.*](#) (1)

Population ageing is a defining global trend of our time. People are living longer, and more are older than ever before. Spectacular improvements in health and survival and reductions in fertility have driven this momentous shift, which has begun or is expected to begin soon in all countries and areas. This change brings both challenges and opportunities as countries strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2022, the world marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. To commemorate this landmark, the World Social Report 2023 explores the economic and social implications of the ageing of the human population. It builds on the Plan of Action’s framework for national policies to create equitable, inclusive societies for people of all ages, providing recommendations to put the rights and well-being of older persons at the centre, across the life course.
2. [WHO. *Physical activity and sedentary behaviour. A brief to support older people*](#) (2)

Regular physical activity is important to promote well-being in older people. It is beneficial for physical and mental health, and facilitates social inclusion by reducing isolation. Being active supports healthy ageing and can also help manage conditions such as hypertension and type 2 diabetes, reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and enhance cognitive function. Conversely, too much sedentary behaviour can be unhealthy. Everyone can benefit from increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour. Supporting older people to do more physical activity is a key strategy to foster healthy and active ageing. However, many people face barriers or may be concerned about becoming more active, particularly if they have a chronic condition. Additional guidance and support can help older people be more active for their physical and mental health and well-being. What this brief will provide This brief summarises the recommendations on physical activity and sedentary behaviour for older people. It will support and guide health and social care professionals and allied workers to promote physical activity among older people to prevent noncommunicable diseases and the decline of intrinsic capacity (i.e., the composite of physical and mental capacities) and also help manage common conditions such as hypertension and type 2 diabetes. Specific recommendations are provided to prevent falls, osteoporosis, and decline of functional ability.
3. [WHO. *A blueprint for dementia research*](#) (3)

Building on previous efforts to prioritize and coordinate research for infectious diseases, WHO set out to develop a blueprint for dementia research (hereafter referred to as “blueprint”) in 2021. This blueprint is the first of its kind in the context of non-infectious diseases and aims to support the global prioritisation of dementia research and provide a coordination mechanism among stakeholders. The specific objectives of this blueprint are to:

 - facilitate timely and high-quality evidence generation to address research gaps
 - fast-track innovation and increase intervention success-rates
 - enhance and encourage collaboration in dementia research
 - build research capacity, especially in LMIC
 - guide actions for mobilizing adequate resources
 - promote the empowerment and engagement of people with lived experience and
 - ensure the successful and timely implementation of research evidence.

Through these objectives, the blueprint directly supports the implementation of the global action plan and accelerates efforts to achieve targets that will make research more equitable, efficient and impactful, ultimately contributing to the provision of better care and support for people living with dementia, their families, and carers.
4. [WHO. *Towards a dementia-inclusive society.*](#)(4)

The purpose of the toolkit is to promote lasting societal change and full inclusion of people with dementia and their families in society. More specifically, the toolkit:

 - presents a common framework that identifies key components of, and partners that need to be involved in creating, dementia inclusiveness;
 - provides guidance on how to use the framework to implement and scale up initiatives, as well as integrate dementia into related initiatives, such as age-friendly, healthy and barrier-free cities; and
 - outlines steps to monitor progress in the initiatives’ implementation and evaluate their impact.
5. [HelpAge International. *Achieving Universal Health Coverage fit for an ageing world.*](#) (5)

Universal health coverage (UHC) means that everyone, everywhere can access the health and care services they need without suffering financial hardship. Progress towards UHC is essential for promoting healthy ageing, delivering social and economic development, and building resilient and equitable societies that respond effectively in times of crisis. The commitment of governments to achieve UHC as part of the Sustainable Development Goals aligns directly with their duty to respect, protect and fulfil all people’s right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, which is also indispensable for the exercise of other human rights. By 2030, 1.4 billion people will be aged 60 or over. Yet the majority of health and care systems worldwide remain unprepared for population ageing and shifting patterns of disease

and disability. Millions of older people do not have access to the health and care services they need. We must harness the opportunity UHC presents to reorient health and care systems and services to meet the needs of an ageing world and uphold the rights of all older people. This means investing in comprehensive, integrated, inclusive and people-centred primary and community-based health and care services that empower people and communities, and promote health and wellbeing for all across the life-course. The impact of COVID-19, climate crisis and wider threats to global health security make achieving UHC for people of all ages even more urgent. To deliver this vision, governments, service providers and global health actors at all levels must work together to ensure:

- UHC addresses the specific barriers older people face to enjoying their right to health,
- Systems are age-, gender-, and disability- responsive and promote healthy ageing for all through integrated primary and community-based health and care services that reach the furthest behind first,
- Models of UHC adopt a rights-based approach, ensuring the voices of all groups, including older people, are heard within system and service design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

III – Upcoming congress

1 2023 IPA International Congress. Lisbon. June 29-July 2 2023

“New Perspectives in a Changing World: Social Connectedness, Aging and Mental Health”

Program at: https://execinccom-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/jkowalski_execinc_com/Edng-CjcJf5GrbUd60zEgXUBz_zb7b_r8aJca4eRVG0HA?time=QHfd6zJY20g

WPA-SOAP, in collaboration with IPA, will participate to two Pre.Congress Workshops:

- a) Humanitarian Crisis and Old Age Mental Health:** Principles of organization of care for older adults during humanitarian crisis. In 2020 there were 727 million persons aged 65 years or over in the world and this number is expected to reach over 1.5 billion in 2050. Of these, 20% suffer of a mental health condition and 60% live in low- and middle-income countries where barriers (stigma, poor access to social and health care systems) present issues even during stable times. A humanitarian crisis is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or wellbeing of a community or group of individuals, and require action that is usually urgent and often non-routine. Examples of such crisis are wars, natural disasters, epidemics and forced immigration. There is an urgent need of an international commitment to planning for humanitarian emergencies that include individual and community psychosocial support for older adults with mental health conditions. The current lack of inclusion for these older adults in humanitarian response is dramatic and constitute a clear violation of their Human Rights. Governments and humanitarian actors need to do more during crisis to ensure that individual's specific needs are addressed. A humanitarian response includes the collective actions of actors responding to the global needs. Each state has the responsibility first to take care of the victims of these emergencies occurring on its territory. Humanitarian actors must provide assistance in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. Promoting and ensuring compliance with these principles are essential elements of effective humanitarian coordination, in respect of the Human Rights principles, in particular when vulnerable people such older adults with mental health conditions are involved. The symposium intends to describe the consequences on older adults' mental health during humanitarian emergencies and discuss potential solutions to improve the humanitarian response for all in need.
- b) Mitigating Ageism in Everyday Clinical Care:** The workshop will involve a strategic and interactive discussion based on real-life case vignettes. Feedback will be sought on the perceived status of dignity and human rights in current clinical practice. Focus will be on ensuring dignity and promoting human rights in routine clinical care and patient-physician communication, age-friendly healthcare settings for older persons and the role of dignity therapy. The need for an International Convention for the rights of older persons will also be highlighted with evidence.

2. World Congress of Psychiatry. Vienna, September 28-October 1 2023

“Psychiatry: current knowledge and perspectives for action”

WPA-SOAP will contribute with the congress program with the following activities.

a) Pre-conference Course: The Art and Science of Positive and Healthy Aging

Date: 28-09-2023. Time: 08:30 – 11:30

The United Nations has declared 2021-2030 as the Decade of Healthy Aging. The World Health Organization has proposed four major target areas: combating ageism, creating more age-friendly cities and communities, securing person-centred integrated healthcare, and providing access to long-term care, so more people can live a healthy and active later life. This Course will address all these 4 main areas as they apply to mental health and mental illnesses.

Ageism is driven by a common misperception that old age is associated with an inevitable decline in brain functioning. The Course Faculty will describe global research during the last 30 years that clearly shows plasticity of the aging brain in people who stay active physically, cognitively, and socially. Body-mind interventions like meditation and mindfulness reduce stress, enhance resilience, and have positive biological effects on brain and body. Positive psychosocial determinants of health such as quality of social connections, wisdom, and positive attitude can be enhanced in age-friendly communities. Many strategies that are available to the general population can also be used, with appropriate modifications, in older adults with mental illnesses. These will be presented along with illustrative case examples.

This Course will be useful to attendees who are interested in understanding the mechanisms that underlie healthy aging and the strategies that promote healthy aging in people with mental illnesses, their families, and also the

healthcare providers themselves. The Course Faculty are internationally renowned experts in aging and mental health. There will be time for questions and comments from the audience after each presentation and toward the end of the session.

Speakers:

- (1) Dilip Jeste, MD - Healthy Aging of the Brain and the Body
- (2) Helen Lavretsky, MD: Resilience and Mind-Body Interventions
- (3) Samantha Boardman, MD: Positive Psychiatry in Mental Illnesses
- (4) Carlos de Mendonca Lima, MD: Using Education to promote healthy aging and to combat ageism.

b) **Session Number: 252**

Session: STATE OF THE ART SYMPOSIUM: MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS: RECENT ADVANCES AND NEW DIRECTIONS IN CLINICAL PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Date: 30-09-2023 Time: 17:45-18:45

Chair: Carlos Augusto de Mendonça Lima (Switzerland)

Co-Chair: Charles F. Reynolds 3rd (USA)

The world's population is aging, bringing about an ever-greater burden of mental disorders in older adults. Given multimorbidities, the mental health care of these people and their caregivers is labor-intensive. Ageism is a central issue for older people, with and without mental disorders. Positive elements of aging, such as resilience, wisdom and prosocial behaviors, need to be highlighted and promoted, both to combat stigma and to help protect and improve mental health in older adults. The positive psychiatry of aging is a scientific concept based in research evidence. This symposium presents the debate published in a recent article¹ addressing these issues in the context of main mental health conditions contributing for several years lived with disability. Authors emphasize the need for implementation of multidisciplinary team care, with comprehensive assessment, clinical management, intensive outreach, and coordination of mental, physical and social health services. There is a need for further research into moderators and mediators of treatment response variability. Authors address positive aging and normal cognitive aging as antidotes to ageism and as a catalyst for change in the way aging and late-life mental conditions are. Directions for future clinical care and research are provided.

1 - World Psychiatry 2022;21:336–363

Speakers:

- (1) Charles F. Reynolds 3rd (USA) - Advances in the Science of Old-Age Depression: Implications for Bridging Science and Care
- (2) Dilip V. Jeste (USA) - Social Determinants of Mental Health in Older Adults: From Biology to Interventions
- (3) Perminder S. Sachdev (Australia) - A research agenda to meet the global challenge of dementia: The WHO Blueprint for Dementia Research
- (4) Carlos Augusto de Mendonça Lima (Switzerland) - Promoting Human Rights of Older Adults with Mental Health Conditions: from fundamental texts to an advocacy strategic plan

c) **Abstract Submission Number: 3206**

Abstract Title: ADVOCATING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA

Session Title: SHORT ORAL 87: OLD AGE

Date: 01-10-2023 Time: 12:15 - 13:30

According to a recent NICE¹ guidelines, advocacy helps to ensure that people's voices, wishes and preferences are heard, their rights are upheld and their needs are met, particularly when they have difficulty in speaking up for themselves or are concerned that they are not being heard. This is particularly seen in the case of older adults mainly in what concerns the combat against ageism. It is a high priority to be vigilant and speak out against ageism in health care as manifested by lack of diagnostic and treatment zeal, and therapeutic nihilism, in which older people with chronic or severe mental health conditions are most vulnerable, despite having greater physical health burden, comorbidities, and premature mortality. In a practical sense, this often means advocating for patients' equal right to medical treatments in acute care environments and ensuring triage decisions for life-saving treatment are based on individualized assessment, not diagnosis nor place of residence such as a care home. We need to accept the responsibility that as mental health professionals, we are often the conduits to equitable access to health care². Finally, advocacy is a high protection of human rights and plays a critical part in safeguarding them.

1 – National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Advocacy services for adults with health and social care needs. Published on 9th November 2022. www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng227

2 – Peisah C and al. IPA and WPA-SOAP joint statement on the rights of older persons with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities. International Psychogeriatrics 2021

doi:10.1017/S1041610221000454

Speakers:

- (1) Kiran Rabheru (Canada) - It's Time for Setting International Standards for Human Rights-Based Care for Older Persons.
- (2) Gabriel Ivbijaro (UK) - NICE Advocacy Guidelines UK: Lessons for a global audience

- (3) Helen Lavretsky (USA - The structure and organizations involved in the advocacy for older adults with neuropsychiatric disorders: contributions of the AAGP / APA
- (4) Carlos Augusto de Mendonça Lima (Switzerland) - Advocating for the implementation of mental health care for older adults in the UN Human Rights agenda

Yours,

Carlos Augusto de Mendonça Lima, M.D., MSci., DSci.
Chair, WPA Section of Old Age Psychiatry