



News from WPA Collaborating Centres- Department of Psychiatry, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, India

Diamond Jubilee International Conference on Mental Health 2023 (DJICMH 2023), Chandigarh, India, 14-16 September 2023

The Department of Psychiatry, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, India, which is also the latest Collaborating Centre of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), organized the Diamond Jubilee International Conference on Mental Health 2023 (DJICMH 2023) in Chandigarh on 14-16 September 2023, to commemorate its Diamond Jubilee.

To provide the context, 16th September 1963 was the day Dr. Narendra Nath Wig, a visionary leader in psychiatry, joined PGIMER Chandigarh, as an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry in the Department of Medicine, which led to the creation of the Department of Psychiatry later in 1968. This day is celebrated as the Foundation Day of the Department of Psychiatry at PGIMER Chandigarh. On this day, the Institute hosts the prestigious **Professor N.N. Wig Oration**.

2023 happens to be the Diamond Jubilee of the Institute, and of the Department. Hence the Diamond Jubilee International Conference on Mental Health in PGIMER, Chandigarh, India on 14-16 September 2023 to commemorate this historic occasion.

Keeping in view the emerging importance of public mental health, the theme of the Conference was: "**Public Mental Health: *Mental Health of the people, by the people, for the people.***" The public mental health paradigm calls for taking a population based public health approach for not only accessible quality *treatment* of mental illnesses but also *preventing* mental illnesses and further *promoting* mental health by adopting a combination of strategies at multiple levels, including the government, healthcare system, educational and social care systems, human rights groups and media participation. This has been one of the major areas of emphasis of WPA, which was the Co-Sponsor of the Conference.

Several World Associations, including the World Psychiatric Association, World Federation for Mental Health, World Association of Social Psychiatry, and International Centre of Person-Centered Medicine were Co-Sponsors for this event.

WPA has played a key role in supporting and shaping this event. In addition to Dr Afzal Javed, President, WPA, being the Patron and the Chief Guest on this occasion, in order to encourage and sensitize young psychiatric and mental health related trainees in the area of public mental health, WPA installed two Travelling Fellowship Awards to create short video logs ("vlogs") on this theme, and the winning entries were played out on the inaugural session. Last but not the least, Dr. Afzal Javed delivered this year's Professor N.N. Wig Oration, on the topic "Mental Health in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities".

The conference recorded an impressive 900+ registrations from 15 countries and witnessed an unprecedented zeal in the area of public mental health as evidenced by plenary talks, symposia, panels, involvement of people with lived experience, multidisciplinary involvement, oral free papers, and e-posters. A major attraction was the display of artwork by school children of Chandigarh, and by children with lived experience.

All in all, these 3 days turned out to be an academic feast. Finally, with the release of the **“Chandigarh Charter on Public Mental Health”** by the WPA at the inaugural function, it should provide directions for the global community to follow to make public mental health a key priority area.

Some of the important photographs of the conference capturing the main moments can be seen at the open source google drive:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bje3T6ozdWiJkyiuGy8pRNJZwTkBtYq5?usp=sharing>

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