



Document title: WPA Section of Old Age Annual Report

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Date: 20 March, 2026

WPA Section of Old Age Psychiatry — Annual Report

The Section maintains WPA-compliant governance and delivers coordinated international leadership across advocacy, education, research, and policy—prioritizing rights-based, person-centred care, UN Convention engagement, and three strategic priorities: global clinical leadership, evidence-practice-experience integration, and an open international collaboration platform.

Membership and governance

Sections Office Bearers and Members List [click here](#).

The Section mourns the sudden and deeply felt loss of our beloved Chair, Professor Lima, whose passing in 2025 left us all in shock. In the wake of this tragedy the Section quickly regrouped, held elections, and recommitted to carrying forward Professor Lima’s work—particularly his leadership on dignity, human rights, and mental health for older persons. Honouring his legacy is central to our mission and has sharpened our resolve: the Section’s overwhelming priority for 2026 is to do whatever it takes to seize the strategic opportunity presented by WPA engagement as the UN moves toward a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

- Compliance: Officer elections conducted per WPA procedures in 2025.

Action Plan:

2025 activities and outputs

- Leadership and advocacy: Framing ageism as a structural determinant of mental health and human rights; active engagement in UN Convention discussions
- Clinical and educational contributions: Chair Dr M S Renuka Prasad presented on Mental health access for vulnerable Indigenous seniors, Dementia-inclusive systems, and Substance Use disorders in late life.
- High-profile roles by Joint Sec Prof Kiran Rabheru co-chaired a Lancet Commission on Long-Term Care and founded the Canadian Coalition Against Ageism (CCAA).
- Research and guidance: Publications and clinical guidelines (including non-pharmacological dementia care) and multiple workshops and lectures by Drs Debanjan Banerjee and Joint Sec Dr Tomas Leon
- Multisectoral convening: International dialogues integrating scientific and lived-experience perspectives.

2026 Planned Activities:

Proposed WPA Congress 2026 Symposiums:

1. Symposium: “Healthy Aging and Compassion”
Dr. M.S. Renuka Prasad, Prof. Dilip Jeste, Prof. N. Sartorius
2. Proposed SOAS Emerging Topics in Alzheimer's Disease; Special Interests Groups, Prevention Strategies, Evolving Treatments
Dr. Kasia Rothenberg, Dr. Thomas Wenzel, Dr. Mehnaz Zafar, and Dr. Florence Thibaut

IPA sessions on dignity and human rights of older adults with mental illness

UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons with Mental Illness to provide ongoing support and leadership

- Framework development: Draft and promote dignity, rights-based, person-centred care frameworks for national and international adoption.
- Education and capacity building: Multilingual and online training (Spanish course, online modules) and expanded workshops for clinicians and allied professionals.

Strategic Priorities for the Section of Old Age Psychiatry in the Coming Years:

- To build a unified international clinical leadership network to coordinate standards, guidance, and rapid response across regions.
- To integrate research evidence, frontline clinical practice, and lived-experience perspectives into a single, iterative care and policy pathway.
- To create an open, non-exclusive international collaboration platform that enables shared projects, resource-pooling, and cross-sector partnerships.
- To support and shape the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons through coordinated policy submissions and advocacy.
- To develop rights-based, person-centred care frameworks for national and international adoption.
- To expand multilingual education and capacity building (including Spanish course and online modules).