

Reports from the WPA Collaborating Centers

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Author : Professor Kam Bhui
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The establishment of the WPA Collaborating Centres in 2014 marked a decisive step in strengthening the global mission of the WPA. Collectively we focus on research, training and education, improving practice, policy, and promoting high quality, effective and safe care globally.





The Centres brought together leading institutions and leadership from different world regions, pooling academic, clinical and policy expertise to support the WPA Action Plan and responses to emerging challenges worldwide.
From their inception, the Centres have acted as bridges between local realities and global strategy, combining scientific excellence and authority with a commitment to education, capacity building and innovation. The number of Centres has expanded to ten sites across diverse countries, among them the UK, Italy, India (2 centres), Egypt, Hong Kong, South Africa, Kenya, Qatar and, the most recent addition in 2025, Switzerland. The mission is to support the WPA Action Plan and the presidential strategy, while retaining independence, agility and flexibility. Centres are self-funded and self-administered, with directors and their teams bringing considerable expertise and resources to the network. In this way, the Centres have added strength to WPA's global offer, promoting WPA's reputation and reach, without imposing additional demands on central resources.

Between 2024-2026, the centres have supported WPA meetings in Vienna, Prague, Mexico, and are supporting additional regional meetings and the upcoming meeting in Sweden in 2026. We also contribute to regional and special interest groups. The centres have supported WPA educational activities and prizes, providing teaching and training in clinical practice and in research, and supporting PhD, Masters and Undergraduate students. Our work in the last triennium has focused on prevention and public mental health, youth mental health, suicide prevention, providing better care for physical and mental health problems in an integrated manner, as well as considering conflict in the world and support for refugees and asylum seekers. The last year has been focused on an expansion of WPA CCs, but preparing a process and documentation to reach underserved areas and national membership societies that are not well connected or represented. The ambition in the coming three years is to expand from 10 to 20 CCs, with more central support and with additional income streams to WPA for research, education, and policy reach and impact.

We sadly lost several dear friends and colleagues, specifically, we pay tribute to Professor Dan Stein, who led the South African Centre. We are deliberating an expansion and will be approaching other centres in Africa and other underserved areas.

REFERENCES

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Director: Professor Kam Bhui, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK.

Deputy Director: Dr Roisin Mooney. Project management: Harsimran Sansoy and Eve Rodgers. Partnerships: Dr Tennyson Lee at the Centre for Understanding Personality; Dr Peter Byrne, Director, Public Mental Health Implementation Centre, Royal College of Psychiatrists UK.

The Oxford Centre led by Prof Bhui serves several functions. Coordination and secretariat for other centres, planning WPA CC meetings, providing newsletter contributions, delivering educational activities and research, and establishing plans to generate income for WPA and expand the WPA CCs (in partnership with other Directors). Prof. Adorjan now co-leads the CCs overall with Prof. Bhui.

Seven WPA educational seminars were produced from on themes of War and Psychiatry, Climate Change and Health, Personality Disorder and Transference Focussed Psychotherapy, Prevention in Public Mental Health (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqx9p0FShAQ261OjnDnSi-8ADS5xczX0v

We produced numerous publications, notably in JAMA psychiatry, BMJ Mental Health, Psychological Medicine, Lancet Planetary Health, World Social Psychiatry. Generally we promote excellence in global health research and policy, and support PhD/DPhil (3 completing in the last year). Bhui edited and contributed to the publication of Short Oxford Textbook in Psychiatry. Our grant income in the triennium exceeded: ~ £24m. We are now preparing new grant applications for WPA.

We undertook shared research on adolescent health and suicide prevention with the WPA CC in Kenya and WPA CC in Chandigarh. We provided mentoring and shared research on climate change and mental health with WPA CC in Italy. We provide teaching and training with partners: trainees receive training in transference focused psychotherapy in South Africa, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, China, and Somaliland. We are developing implementation of depression interventions adapted for local social and cultural realities, by new funding applications with Schulze and Adorjan (e.g. improving depression treatments through cultural adaptation of platforms in Pakistan, Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Switzerland, Italy and UK).

The UK and Chandigargh India centre promoting public mental health and preventive psychiatry research and implementation. Bhui is a research and implementation lead at Public Mental Health Implementation Centre at RCPsych.



Professor Kristina Adorjan, Bern, Switzerland

In September 2024, the University of Bern established a new Competence Center for Global Mental Health Research in collaboration with the World Psychiatric Association (WPA). As the newest addition to the WPA Collaborating Centre network, the Swiss Collaborating Centre specialises in biological and genetic research, with a particular focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. The centre also leads initiatives in training and capacity development for researchers from low- and middle-income countries and has contributed to WPA congresses. https://www.upd.unibe.ch/research/research_groups/group_adorjan/research/index_eng.html

Kristina supports WPA sections, special interest groups, and regional groups, including scientific and publishing committees. Together with Bhui, she co-leads the WPA Collaborating Centres and plays a key role in expanding the global network of centres.



Professor Andrea Fiorillo, Naples, Italy

The Naples WPA Collaborating Centre has carried out activities on the three main pillars education, research and international collaboration. The Naples Centre disseminated educational resources specifically focused on the management of physical comorbidities in patients with severe mental disorders and on the improvement of healthy lifestyle behaviours.

Other educational activities include the dissemination of the chapter on mental disorders of the ICD-11, as well as the adaptation and dissemination of psychosocial interventions for the promotion of mental health and well-being in migrant population.

Researchers have contributed to the publication of an international handbook of psychiatry and mental health (i.e., "Social determinants of mental health", edited by Springer) and to the organization of the scientific sessions at the WPA annual congress. There is an active collaboration with the University of Bern on the promotion of Brain Health and on the improvement and dissemination of digital psychiatry.

Several research projects are funded by national and international institutions as well as self-funded, dealing with precision psychiatry, the role of neuro-inflammation on relapse in patients with severe mental disorders, prevention of mental disorders among young people, the management of mental disorders in women in the peripartum period, the impact of climate change on mental health, and the role of social determinants and exposome on mental disorders.

Promotion of postgraduate education is still the core of the activities of Centre. In particular, the Centre is particularly active in supporting early career psychiatrists and creating opportunities for medical students to engage with psychiatry during medical school training.

The Naples Centre has collaborations with Italian Universities and international sites, (Hospital Universitario La Paz, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Maastricht University, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich Clinic for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University College of London, and University of Oxford).



Director: Professor Muhammad Waqar Azeem, Sidra Medicine, Doha, Qatar.
Deputy Director: Dr. Ahsan Nazeer

Salient clinical services and initiatives include: a) Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Women's Mental Health services. b) Treating children and families from Gaza, Ukraine, and Afghan Refugees. c)Providing mental health services to Assalam Schools, a part of "Education Above All" initiative. d) Autism Friendly Hospital Initiative to improve the level of comfort for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) while they are receiving medical care at Sidra Medicine.

Education

- Undergraduates: Hosting medical students from Weill Cornell Medicine and Qatar University, Doha, Qatar
- Postgraduates: We established the world's first ACGMEI Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship. General Psychiatry Trainees and Pediatric Residents. Neurology and Developmental Pediatrics Fellows
- Other Specialities Students and Trainings: Internship for Psychology Master's Trainees, nurses and physicians, local schools and community groups

Research

- Research grants cover autism, ADHD, perinatal depression and anxiety, early-onset psychosis, genetics, neuroimaging, psychological aspects of chronic medical conditions, and validation of psychological scales.
- Faculty have produced more than 60 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters in the last three years.
- Faculty have co-edited five textbooks.
- The center has delivered more than 100 national and international presentations in the last three years.

Collaborations

- **International Collaborations: WPA**, WHO, AFPA, Arabian Gulf Child & Adolescent Association, WPA Collaborating Centers, WPA Education Section, WPA CAMHS Section, WPA SIG on Medical Students, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) Global Mental Health / International Relations Committee, Royal College of Psychiatrists UK.
- **National Collaborations:** Ministry of Public Health, National Mental Health and Well Being Task Force, World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), HMC, PHCC, Qatar Foundation Schools, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), Doha Institute of Graduate Studies (DI), Qatar University (QU), Local Advocacy Groups



Professor David Ndetei & Dr Victoria Mutiso, Nairobi, Kenya.

Africa Institute of Mental and Brain Health (AFRIMEB) is a leading centre in the region in mental health and brain health research. Over the last 20 years, the institute has advanced mental health research, training, and service delivery across Africa by leading interdisciplinary research and large-scale epidemiological studies in Kenya. These include biomarker-informed investigations, thereby generating evidence to inform policy and practice, particularly among vulnerable and underserved populations.

A strong emphasis has been placed on community empowerment through mental health awareness, capacity building, and engagement with community health systems to improve access and reduce stigma.

The centre has expanded its focus on a broad range of priority conditions, including dementia, depression, PTSD, stress, ADHD, suicide, anxiety, psychosis, substance use, mental state of the homelessness population and the nexus between intimate partner violence (IPV) and climate-related mental health.
A key milestone for the institute is the establishment of a memory clinic within its precincts, which addresses a critical gap in mental and brain health services. The clinic provides dedicated assessment, diagnosis, and intervention for individuals experiencing memory-related challenges, cognitive decline, and dementia-spectrum conditions.

The centre continues to build capacity through training programs for early-career researchers, clinicians, and community health workers, alongside collaborations with local and international partners. Additionally, AFRIMEB contributes to national policy development and advocacy aimed at strengthening mental health systems.

Through its integrated approach, combining research, service delivery, training, and policy engagement, AFRIMEB is significantly contributing to reducing the mental health treatment gap and improving outcomes across diverse populations in Africa.



Director:Prof. Tarek Okasha, Cairo, Egypt

The Okasha institute of psychiatry is dedicated to high quality psychiatric care. Service stared in July 1990 and offers specialized care in response to public need besides education and research.
Services: *Inpatient*: The institute has 72 beds in six wards including with 4 units (General adult psychiatry, liaison psychiatry, child & adolescent psychiatry, women psychiatry, substance abuse & dual diagnosis and a psychiatric intermediate care unit (PICU). The inpatient department served **856** patients in 2025.

Outpatient: The outpatient department served around 38,106 clients in 2025. The clinic includes: General psychiatry clinic, Child psychiatry clinics, Substance Abuse& dual diagnosis clinics, Old age psychiatry clinic, Psychosexual disorders clinic, sleep disorders clinic, memory clinic, eating disorders clinic, tobacco cessation clinic and 24 hour Emergency Service Facilities.



Prof. Subho Chakrabarti, Postgraduate institute of medical education and research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, India

The Department of Psychiatry at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) is located in Chandigarh, India. It is a general hospital psychiatric unit attached to a large, multi-speciality, tertiary-care hospital, with a large catchment area and high patient turnover. It provides general adult, child/adolescent, and substance use services. It has been a part of several WHO collaborative studies. During 2024–2026, the WPA-CC at PGI actively engaged in public mental health initiatives.

Training: The main focus was on integrating psychiatric services with primary healthcare and community outreach. The Centre organised training programmes for medical officers and continuing medical education activities for psychiatrists and allied mental health professionals in the community. The themes were early identification and prevention of mental disorders, suicide prevention, substance use disorders, social determinants of mental health, and stigma reduction.

Research: The Centre is conducting research on social contact–based interventions for reducing public stigma toward individuals with opioid use disorder.

Mental Health Awareness: The Centre also contributed to public awareness and advocacy activities.

Weekly school mental health programmes conducted by the Child/Adolescent services addressed common mental illnesses, examination stress, bullying, and problematic screen use, along with teacher awareness programmes on special childcare needs.

Monthly awareness sessions by the substance use services focused on substance use prevention and the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.

The Centre also collaborated with the local government to provide skills training and employment opportunities for our patients and promote mental health awareness across educational institutions in Chandigarh.



Prof Linda CW Lam, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong

Education: Our department provides undergraduate teaching to medical tudents of the Faculty of Medicine at the CUHK. We also accept aspiring postgraduate research students seeking MPhil and PhD studies in clinical and translational Psychiatry from all over the world.

Research: Our department has been active in a wide spectrum of mental health research from basic science, translational, clinical to epidemiological research including but not limiting to neurodevelopmental disorders (Autistic Spectrum Disorder in particular), community intervention on neurocognitive disorders, sleep and circadian rhythm disorders, translational neuroscience and digital mental health.

Our department has collaborated with other research units in Psychiatry and other disciplines both locally and internationally. We have collaborated with the Centre for Gut Microbiota Research at CU Medicine to provide a combined clinical and research programme for children with suspected Autistic Spectrum Disorder. In collaboration with the Department of Health of the Government of Hong Kong SAR, we have completed a 15-year territory-wide study to investigate the associations of different lifestyle behaviours and vascular risk factors with risk of dementia in older adults.

We have also completed a 9 year follow up study of anxiety and depressive disorders in Hong Kong adults, exploring significant psychosocial and lifestyle factors associated with long term outcome of common mental disorders in Hong Kong. Our team in sleep studies have ongoing collaboration with Peking University in China on community intervention for sleep hygiene. Our collaboration in the International COVID Sleep study (ICOSS I and II) with 14 countries/regions aim to identify the impact of COVID-19 on different sleep symptoms. We are pioneering the development of AI assisted models in early detection of complex behavioural phenotypes in major mental disorder; and we are developing of AI assisted simulation training in clinical psychiatric teaching.



Professor Janardhan Reddy, NIMHANS, Bengalore, India.

The Department of Psychiatry at NIMHANS is the oldest and largest department of psychiatry in India. Alumni from this department are now in leadership positions in institutions in the country and abroad. The department was established 70 years ago as the first postgraduate department in psychiatry.

Education: We offer post-graduate residency training in psychiatry (40 junior residents joining MD degree in psychiatry every year through a national level entrance exam conducted for institutes of national importance). We offer training on medicine, clinical psychology, psychiatric social work, and nursing (DM, MD, BSc/MSc, MPhil, and PhD degrees). The Department offers extramural training to postgraduates in psychiatry, internal medicine as well as students of clinical psychology, psychiatric social work, psychiatric nursing, and allied disciplines.

Clinical services offered by the institute: Adult, Geriatric, Addiction, Child and Adolescent psychiatry, Rehabilitation, Community, Telemedicine, Forensic, Brain stimulation including ECT, TMS and tDCS, centre for well-being, psychiatric subspecialties (perinatal, OCD, metabolic, schizophrenia, Consultation-liaison, etc).

Policy and programs: The department led the National Mental Health Survey (NMHS-1 and 2), and is the apex nodal center for the National Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele MANAS), India's free, confidential, 24/7 national tele-mental health helpline launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. NIMHANS has been designated the Coordinating Centre of Excellence (CoE) for the BRICS Network of CoE in mental health. This is a significant step towards advancing collaboration in mental health research, training and evidence-based care across BRICS countries. Through the NIMHANS Digital Academy (NDA), thousands of health care professionals receive training in the management of psychiatric disorders. The department contributed to the Indian Psychiatric Society treatment guidelines, Covid guidelines for management of patients, National Human Rights Quality Improvement, National Mental Health Policy, National guidelines for drug abuse treatment, etc.

Research: Some of the major research activities include the Center for Brain and Mind (CBM), in collaboration with the National Center for Biological Sciences (NCBS) funded by the Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, the C-VEDA (Consortium on Vulnerability to Externalising Disorders and Addictions), the B-CHADS (Bangalore- Child Health And Development Study), the Clinical Research Centre for Neuromodulation in Psychiatry, Global study on the Identification of Obsessive-Compulsive Profiles, the A-BIGNET (Asian Bipolar Genetics Network), the ENIGMA (Enhancing Neuroimaging Genetics through Meta-analysis) OCD and the India ENIGMA Initiative for Global Aging and Mental Health Aging study.

Funding support and collaborations: The research at the institute is supported by Government of India (e.g., DBT, DST, ICMR), international grants (e.g., NIH, NIMH, MRC, Wellcome Trust etc.) and philanthropies. The institute also has collaborations with the WHO, and several universities in the UK, USA, Canada, and Australia.