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Medical-social collaboration: a solution to managing mental health needs in the community

Mental health is an integral component of health and recognised as important for sustainable economic development. The World Health Organization and countries around the world widely agree there is no health without mental health.

IN COMMUNITY CARE

With the move of psychiatric care from hospital to community, it is vital that in-community mental health service delivery capacity be built up.

To address mental health needs in the community is not an easy task. The complex causes of mental illness requires a whole range of biopsychosocial intervention with multidisciplinary involvement. A stepped model of care requires well-coordinated strategies and community partnership. Integrated care is key to responding to mental health needs to prevent fragmentation of service and to manage risks and needs.

Personal recovery is the ultimate aim for people with mental illness—to take control of their lives, to adjust to life after illness and to rediscover and develop their personal potential while on their journey of recovery.

Community resources should be well matched with the needs of individuals recovering from mental illness to facilitate recovery oriented care.

In 2013, the World Health Assembly approved a comprehensive *Mental Health Action Plan* for

2013-2020. The plan is committed by all WHO member states with four key objectives:

1. Strengthen effective leadership and governance for mental health
2. Provide comprehensive, integrated and responsive mental health and social care services in community based settings
3. Implement strategies for promotion and prevention in mental health
4. Strengthen information systems, evidence and research for mental health

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HONG KONG

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a densely populated metropolitan city with 7.35 million people living on 1,105 square kilometres.

The health care system in Hong Kong is a dual track system with 90% of inpatient services treated in a public system and 70% of outpatient services treated by private service providers.

A 2010-13 Hong Kong Mental Morbidity Survey found a high need for mental health care and a high burden of care.

Responding to increased demand and challenges in mental health care, the Hospital Authority of Hong Kong developed the *Hospital Authority Adult Mental Health Service Plan 2010-15* with a vision for a person-centred service based on effective treatment and recovery of the individual.

Key initiatives include enhancement of Community Psychiatric Service and a phased roll-out of a territory wide Personalized Care Programme beginning in 2010-11 by the Hospital Authority to seven Hospital Authority clusters covering all 18 Hong Kong districts.

Concurrently, the Social Welfare Department rolled out 26 Integrated Centres for Mental Wellness in all 18 districts complementing community psychiatric service initiative and aimed at providing social support at regional level.

MEDICAL-SOCIAL COLLABORATION

In 2013, a review committee on mental health was set up to study Hong Kong's existing mental health policy with a view to map out the future direction for development of mental health services.

For adult psychiatric services, the review committee recommended establishing a medical-social collaboration model and to review community psychiatric service provision with a view of enhancing community support for persons with mental illness in the community.

In 2014, the Hospital Authority, the Social Welfare Department and major psychiatric NGOs set up a taskforce to implement various

enhancement measures which included development of a service framework, development of a standardized tool in need-strength-risk assessment, development of operational guidelines, and designing a common consent form for referral and staff training.

The service framework for adults with severe mental illness was released in September 2016 after widespread consultation of stakeholders and users.

The roll-out of staff training is in progress, and an evaluation will be conducted. Coordination and communication at senior executive level were established for implementation, coordination and evaluation.

Other medical-social collaboration is evolving to manage mental health needs of school student and aged persons with mild to moderate dementia.

Ingredients for successful medical-social collaboration include high level leadership and governance structures, clear cut geographical network to facilitate collaboration, buy-in from stakeholders, good coordination and communication logistics, and monitoring and evaluation with user involvement.

Dr Eva Dunn will be talking about medical social collaboration at 11:00am on Thursday 11 October 2018 during day 2 of the World Hospital Congress.

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