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WPA Secretary for Education work plan

WPA vision is to advocate for “a world in which people live in conditions that promote mental health and have access to mental health treatment and care that meet appropriate professional and ethical standards, integrate public health principles and respect human rights”.

To achieve the aim of ensuring equitable access to mental health care for people in different parts of the world, high-quality mental health education for professionals taking care of people with mental health problems must be provided. Driving sustainable changes in mental health services also requires collaborative partnerships with service users, carers, and other community stakeholders^{1,2}.

Therefore, my WPA education vision is “Education for all: no matter who you are, where you are, and how you are, with a strategic intent to improve mental health of all people around the Globe”.

Service users and carers, as well as the general public, should have access to evidence-based mental health information. With the assistance of Member Societies and early career psychiatrists, the WPA website will provide hyperlinks to websites with high-quality mental health information³. As of today, we have identified websites with this information in seven languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic, Hindi and Urdu.

Another initiative is to form a work group to establish a simple guideline for Member Societies and interested individuals to standardize the translation of important WPA documents into major languages.

A related project is to compile a list of recommended, evidence-based mental health apps for mobile devices through the support of the Section of e-Mental Health and other relevant WPA Scientific Sections. Besides, future WPA meetings

will be expected to include free public forums for service users, carers and community stakeholders on topics of major concern to the host countries.

A global survey of training provisions involving WPA Member Societies was conducted in 2017⁴. The survey revealed that 30% of respondent countries provided less than 36 months of psychiatric training. A framework for psychiatric training has been developed and released on the WPA website⁵. The next step is to assist those countries to enhance their psychiatric training and education through different educational initiatives. Given that many psychiatrists with limited training are working in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), an online psychiatric education programme will be an important educational tool⁶.

The WPA has recently collaborated with the University of Melbourne to develop a completely online diploma programme on International Psychiatry⁷. The syllabus aims at enhancing knowledge and skills in psychiatric and risk assessment, essential psychopharmacology, basic psychotherapy, and social and cultural psychiatry. Potential sponsors are currently being identified to provide scholarships for these target participants, particularly those from Member Societies with less than 36 months of psychiatric training. Collaboration with other regional psychiatric associations is also underway to promote this online programme.

Apart from online education, face-to-face experiential training remains an important mode of education. A network of volunteer psychiatrists with different psychiatric expertise is now being developed in collaboration with major national psychiatric associations. The WPA will serve as a platform to coordinate continuous training and supervision by experts addressing the identified needs in the re-

ipient countries, and to find potential sponsors to support travel and accommodation costs for the visiting scholars. Such travel fellowships have been found to be valuable in other medical specialties⁸. This programme is now under development in Asia in collaboration with the Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations (AFPA).

Apart from supporting psychiatrists who have completed psychiatric training, the WPA is determined to support and develop talents for mental health at the start of medical career. In collaboration with the International Federation of Medical Students, a global survey on the psychiatric curriculum in basic medical education has just been completed. The survey results will inform the WPA on how undergraduate psychiatric curriculum can be enriched in medical school education⁹.

The WPA also recognizes early career psychiatrists as our next generation in promoting the betterment of global mental health. Therefore, every work group on education will have at least one early career psychiatrist being involved as a regular member. Apart from having their voices and ideas being heard in these work groups, early career psychiatrists may also benefit from learning the leadership styles of senior members. Last but not least, future WPA congresses will endeavor to identify possible means to support medical students and early career psychiatrists to participate in educational symposia and academic exchanges.

The educational needs of other professionals working in mental health will also be addressed. The aforementioned WPA online diploma also targets primary care doctors working with patients with mental health problems. Separate scholarships will also be identified for this target group of potential applicants. Fur-

thermore, joint educational activities will be developed in collaboration with the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA).

Given the high prevalence of common mental disorders in the community across the world and the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for these disorders, health professionals taking care of patients with these disorders in the primary care sector should be equipped with the relevant basic CBT skills¹⁰.

Existing evidence-based CBT manuals targeted for health professionals at var-

ious levels of clinical experience in different languages will be identified. CBT therapists and supervisors from the relevant WPA Scientific Sections will be recruited to disseminate these CBT skills during their travel fellowships to LMIC and WPA courses organized in WPA meetings.

Roger Man Kin Ng
WPA Secretary for Education

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Action Plan of the WPA Secretary for Publications

What makes the exceptional value of the WPA is the unique opportunity it offers to accommodate the diversity of psychiatry, not only in its geographical and cultural aspects, but also in its theoretical and practical dimensions. This diversity makes, indeed, the richness of psychiatry as long as it is integrated under a common umbrella like the one provided by the WPA. This integrative mission is explicitly highlighted in the WPA Action Plan 2017-2020¹.

Within this global framework, publications are situated between science (or knowledge) and education (or training), in reference to evidence and value based good practices². It is, therefore, mainly a mediating stage between the input of knowledge and the output of education. The main aim of publications is then to be integrated in this general process to serve WPA goals for the benefit of psychiatry, mental health and their users or patients.

In this general perspective, publications have, however, several specific tasks. Among them, the dissemination of knowledge to improve psychiatric science and practice and the promotion of the visibility, the funding and the academic recognition of Psychiatry, of WPA and of WPA components, in particular Member Societies and the psychiatrists they associate.

For that purpose, we consider crucial to take into account the lack of resources of low- and middle-income countries (LAMIC) and the glass-ceiling effect professionals often face in less scientifically favored contexts, when they want to get published. Linguistic, cultural and educational reasons account for many of these difficulties, but they are far from being the only or the most important obstacles met by these colleagues. Even more crucial is often the lack of theoretical and practical incentives in the less scientifically informed and methodologically trained contexts.

To address this issue, it is crucial to improve the quality of psychiatry worldwide. To reach this objective, we will have to keep in mind that the WPA is not a scientific organization as any other: beside knowledge dissemination and evidence-based training, the WPA should aim at increasing its prestige and its scientific recognition, so that it can use them to reduce the above contextual limitations and promote the production emerging from less favored zones of the world.

In this action, the stake of our work in the WPA will be to encompass, on one hand, the state of the art in the various domains involved in psychiatry, taking into account the huge differences of scientific levels according to each of these

domains, and, on the other hand, the reality of psychiatric practices in the various contexts in which psychiatry and psychiatrists are struggling to help as efficiently as possible real patients and carers they meet in their “natural” settings.

Multiple actions can be proposed in the publication domain to reach these, potentially contradictory, overall goals. Building on the extraordinary success of the WPA official scientific journal, *World Psychiatry* (it recently reached the impressive impact factor of 30, under the direction of M. Maj, its Editor), our publication project will try to renew WPA efforts to increase the number, the scientific quality and the dissemination of the products of psychiatric knowledge and experience.

For that purpose, one of our proposals will be to commission and contribute to produce WPA or WPA sponsored books on relevant topics, with recognized publishers and editors, increasing the visibility of these productions through the WPA website and WPA meetings.

As an international organization, we will also do our best to support the translations of *World Psychiatry* in various languages (Russian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese). The same efforts will be made to produce or trans-