

Health, that convened at the Annual Meeting of the Global Future Councils in Dubai in November 2019.

Quickly developing technology will change industries, governments and societies in the future. The Council's mandate is to address the potential and pitfalls of these developments for mental health, particularly concentrating on youth suicide prevention. Its program for 2020 follows the report of its predecessor in 2018-19, which emphasized the need to outline ethical principles in using data and technology for early diagnostics and prevention of mental illness⁷. The WPA is positioned to contribute to constructive debate on these topics with Member Societies, service user and family care advisors, as well as other partners.

A range of other programs and projects that contribute to progress on the Action Plan is underway with support from WPA officers and components. These include

our education, publications and scientific programs⁸⁻¹¹, and the meetings program, with the Regional Congress in St. Petersburg and the 20th World Congress of Psychiatry in Bangkok. The active work of many of the Scientific Sections, and the early career psychiatrists, is a tribute to the power of collective action¹²⁻¹⁴.

Collaborative work with the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) on competencies in mental health for family doctors, and a survey of the demography and training of psychiatrists worldwide are in progress through Member Societies and with the work of Secretary for Education R. Ng, the WPA Secretariat, and WPA consultants Community Works.

My colleagues and I in the WPA Executive Committee welcome the suggestions and engagement of our Member Societies as we endeavour to support psychiatry and its positive impact on mental health globally.

Helen Herrman
WPA President

1. Herrman H. *World Psychiatry* 2017;16:329-30.
2. Wallcraft J, Amering M, Friedin J et al. *World Psychiatry* 2011;10:229-36.
3. Herrman H. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:113-4.
4. Herrman H, Kieling C, McGorry P et al. *Lancet* 2019;393:e42-3.
5. Herrman H. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:236-7.
6. Sinha M. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:237-8.
7. Doraiswamy PM, London E, Varnum P et al. *Empowering 8 billion minds: enabling better mental health for all via the ethical adoption of technologies*. Washington: National Academy of Medicine, 2019.
8. Ng RMK. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:374-5.
9. Botbol M. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:375-6.
10. Schulze TG. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:373-4.
11. Kallivayalil RA. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:239.
12. Cohen MA, Makurumidze G, Pereira LF et al. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:340-1.
13. Giordano GM, Borgwardt S. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:241-2.
14. Pinto da Costa M, Dima K, Ng RMK. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:243-4.

DOI:10.1002/wps.20750

WPA educational initiatives: where are we after three years?

In the past three years, the goal of the WPA educational work has been to "promote education for all, no matter who you are, where you are and how you are". The targets of the educational work are service users and carers, medical students, primary care doctors, early career and experienced psychiatrists, mental health professionals, and WPA Member Societies¹.

The WPA has set up an advisory group of service users and carers², one of its roles being providing user-focused advice on the educational content of the upcoming WPA congresses and participating in various taskforces with an aim to enrich educational materials with service users' perspectives. Working with our service users and carers is extremely important for service quality improvement and also for creating a united voice to lobby national governments and fundholders to invest in mental health.

In order to enhance psychiatric education on recovery-based care, the WPA is working with several institutions in promoting evidence-based educational ma-

terials for different stakeholders of mental health care^{3,4}.

Given the scope of mental health problems and the constraints of resources in training psychiatrists in most parts of the world, the WPA strategically focuses on enhancing psychiatric education for medical students and primary care doctors, both of which playing pivotal roles in increasing accessibility and acceptability of mental health care in most parts of the world.

The WPA collaborated with the International Federation of Medical Students (IFMSA), conducting a global survey on students' perspectives about the quality of undergraduate psychiatric education in their respective countries. The survey was published in *World Psychiatry*⁵ and is freely available online for a wide readership. It enables the WPA to identify regions with pressing needs of undergraduate psychiatric education.

As a complement to this survey, another global endeavour was made which canvassed the wisdom of over 20 educational experts around the world to depict the current landscape of global psychiatric

education. This collective wisdom will be crystallized in a publication to be freely available online.

Based on the findings of these academic activities, the WPA is now working closely with several Member Societies as pilot sites to conduct medical students' workshops to enhance their awareness of public and personal mental health. There will be an ongoing study to evaluate how these workshops can have an impact on the students' attitudes towards psychiatry and their stigma towards mental health issues.

As aforementioned, primary care doctors are our important partners of mental health care and shoulder key responsibilities in preventing and managing mental health problems in many parts of the world. The WPA is working closely with the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) to identify possible areas of collaboration. A global survey was conducted to understand how senior psychiatrists viewed the primary mental health competencies developed by the WONCA for primary care doctors around the world. Based on the survey findings, the WPA and WONCA are

planning to develop mental health educational initiatives for medical students, medical schools and primary care doctors globally.

While recognizing the important roles of primary care doctors and other health professionals in providing mental health care, the WPA is fully aware that psychiatrists are key mental health service providers, trainers of other professionals, academic mental health researchers, as well as leaders and advocates of public mental health care.

In order to set a minimum global training standard that meets the above strategic role requirements, the WPA released a set of key recommendations on the postgraduate psychiatric curriculum. The Association is now conducting a global survey on whether national training curricula offered by Member Societies are meeting these recommendation standards.

Furthermore, the WPA is conducting a global survey on the demographic landscape of psychiatrists. These data will inform the Association on how to advise Member Societies on the national strategy for building up mental health capacity. They are also highlighting the shortage of training and education for many early career psychiatrists in different parts of the world. As such, pre-congress workshops with a focus on skill acquisition are now regularly offered hand in hand with WPA conference lectures and symposia providing updates in knowledge⁶.

While conferences are ideal for intensive learning within a short period of time, many early career and trained psychiatrists in resource-constrained regions cannot afford the time and money to attend

these academic events. Recognizing their learning needs, some of these educational materials will soon be available on the WPA website⁷.

Besides, the WPA is now working actively with potential funding bodies to support and study the impact of early career psychiatrists after undergoing the one-year diploma course on international psychiatry developed jointly by the WPA and the University of Melbourne.

Apart from knowledge and skill acquisition, the WPA has also formed an international taskforce to develop a new volunteering programme to encourage early career and experienced psychiatrists joining hands to provide in-reach training to professionals working in under-served areas around the world. This programme also hopes to mobilize national experts from high-income countries to address national training and educational needs of WPA Member Societies in regions with under-served populations. Further work is now ongoing to delineate the relative functional and legal roles of the volunteers, the volunteer Member Societies, the host Societies and the WPA in the programme.

While these endeavours might sound promising and meaningful, they will not be beneficial to our stakeholders if they are not user-friendly, acceptable and accessible to them. In order to enable learners from different countries, especially those from underserved populations, to receive high-quality education, it is important to have a user-friendly and stable online platform for supporting these educational activities.

The WPA is now seeking educational grants from potential donors to set up a

new learning management system. With such an online platform in place, high-quality teaching materials such as powerpoint slides with voices, webinars, and live video streams could be readily available⁸. Real-time training and supervision in the form of virtual classrooms and chat rooms can be set up to connect trainers and learners living in far end corners of the world.

In order to achieve our mission of providing education regardless of location, training experiences and professional backgrounds, the WPA needs the support of all Member Societies in responding to global surveys, nominating colleagues into different taskforces, participating in different educational initiatives, as well as giving feedback on the experience of participating in the development and the use of these educational resources.

Let us join hands to make the WPA a global learning organization, so as to equip our stakeholders with the proper attitudes, skills and knowledge to enhance global mental health.

Roger M.K. Ng
WPA Secretary for Education

1. Ng RMK. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:374-5.
2. Herrman H. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:113-4.
3. Herrman H. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:236-7.
4. Herrman H. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:368-9.
5. Pinto da Costa M, Dima K, Ng RMK. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:243-4.
6. Schulze TG. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:373-4.
7. Kallivayalil RA. *World Psychiatry* 2018;17:238-9.
8. Kallivayalil RA. *World Psychiatry* 2019;18:239.

DOI:10.1002/wps.20751

Mental health economics: bridging research, practice and policy

The WPA Section on Mental Health Economics focuses on economic factors in the provision, organization and use of services for mental and addictive disorders in countries across the world.

The Section was founded in 1998 and given permanent status approval by the WPA in 1999. By that time, a group of health economists had established the field of

mental health economics, with substantial research knowledge about psychiatric practice and mental health policy.

Two primary aims of the Section are to encourage interdisciplinary research among psychiatrists, health economists and other mental health professionals, and to facilitate communication among those who finance, organize, provide and use mental

health services.

Over the last three decades, clinicians have felt it increasingly necessary to become familiar with the conceptual frameworks of health economics and its applied research. This was considered necessary because economic analysis is an important part of how policy-makers and payers assess the recommendations of clinicians