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25th European Congress of Psychiatry

Symposia

Symposium: Promoting mental health in the health and non-health sectors

S001

Conceptual aspects of mental health in its intersection with human rights and development

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Introduction Improving mental health of people is an important goal of the present millennium. Community-based services programs for prevention of mental disorders and promotion of mental health have been implemented in several countries. However, the proportion of people suffering from mental disorders is significantly and persistently high, and psychosocial distress due to migration, natural disasters, and terrorism; in general, feeling of insecurity is unlikely to improve current figures.

Aims To highlight the interrelatedness of mental health, development and human rights, in particular in women and girls.

Methods The presentation will consider conceptual aspects of mental health in its intersection with human rights and development, with particular reference to women and girls.

Results Current definitions of mental health might be misleading and convey the false expectation that mental health coincides with happiness and productivity. An alternative conceptual framework will be presented, in which mental health is a dynamic state of internal equilibrium that enables individuals to use their abilities in harmony with universal values of society. Different factors concur to the dynamic equilibrium, and will be discussed in their intersection with human rights and development, with particular reference to the most frequent violations of human rights (e.g. trafficking, domestic abuse, sexual violence) that contribute to increase the risk of mental disorders in women and girls.

Conclusion Mental health is rooted in personal development and social context in which the person lives. Strategies aimed to address mental health in women and girls will need to consider gender, country and socio-cultural specificities.

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S002

Interventions in the health and non-health sectors aimed at promoting mental health

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The impact of social determinants on women's mental health is becoming clearer worldwide. Poverty, violence and communal insecurity are among the main challenges to women's mental health and the health of their families. Depression is one of the most common mental disorders experienced by women. It typically has an early onset in life and is more frequently found in women made vulnerable by trauma.

Improving mental health for women and girls requires early intervention for depression and other mental disorders; with gender sensitive clinical care and support for recovery in primary health care, and mother, child and reproductive health settings. Early intervention in primary health care and collaboration with patients and family carers encourage integration of mental health with the health care system, in turn protective of human rights.

In addition, gender equity and observance of human rights need to be embedded in policy and practice in health and non-health sectors to ensure that women's mental health is promoted and mental illnesses adequately prevented and treated. Effective promotion of mental health and prevention of mental disorders is possible in countries of all income levels.

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S003

The needs of women users of mental health services and their families

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Aim Understand the needs of women users of mental health services and their families and discuss consequences.