

Presidential address

PSYCHIATRIC PRACTICE IN KERALA: CURRENT SCENARIO AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Delivered at 38th Annual Conference of the Branch of Indian Psychiatric Society, Kerala (SIPSCON) 2022 on 27th August 2022

Alfred V Samuel^{1*}

¹Holy Cross Hospital, Kottiyam, Kollam

*Corresponding address: Consultant Psychiatrist, Holy Cross Hospital, Kottiyam, Kollam, PIN - 691571.

Email: dralfredsamuel@hotmail.com

Respected Immediate Past President of the Branch of Indian Psychiatric Society Kerala Dr. Radhakrishnan M.P, Chief Guest Justice C.K Abdul Rahim, South Zone President Dr. Remanan Earat, Editor Dr. Vidhu Kumar K, Treasurer Dr. Sagar T, Past Presidents distinguished guests and friends,

Thank you all for unanimously electing me as the President of the Branch of the Indian Psychiatric Society, Kerala, for the year 2022 - 23. I feel humbled and at the same time honored by the confidence you have bestowed upon me. I feel jittery when I think about occupying the chair once adorned by the stalwarts like Dr. James T Antony, my Professor Dr. K A Kumar, Dr. Roy Abraham, etc. I am well aware of the responsibilities and challenges associated with this post and will put in my sincere efforts to protect the interests of the profession and its members.

Congratulations and appreciation go to the Immediate Past President Dr. Radhakrishnan MP for his adorable leadership and commitment. His main project to help students with mobile addiction deserves special applause. I also congratulate Secretary Dr. Anoop Vincent, Treasurer Dr. Sagar T, Editor Dr. Vidhukumar K and all the Executive Committee members for their excellent teamwork.

Access the article online:
<https://kiponline.com/index.php/kip/article/view/369>
 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30834/KJP.35.2.2022.369>
 Received: 04/09/2022.
 Web publication: 28/12/2022.

QR Code



SUICIDE PREVENTION.

Latest data as per WHO indicates that 7,00,000 people die by suicide across the world per year, more than that of malaria, HIV/AIDS, breast cancer or war. More than one in every hundred death is by suicide and it is the fourth leading cause of death among young adults. National Crime Records Bureau shows 1,53,052 suicides in India during 2020 which is an increase of 10% from the previous year. The rate of suicides was 11.3 per one lakh population during the year 2020, an increase of 10.4% from the previous year. In Kerala, the rate is 24, more than double that of the National average. Suicide is a public health issue with psychological, social and economic impact. Despite the complexity of this phenomenon suicides are preventable to a great extent by timely and often low-cost strategies.

WHO recommends the following effective evidence-based interventions:

- Limit access to the means of suicide
- Responsible reporting of suicide by the media
- Foster socio-emotional life skills in children
- Early identification assessment, management and follow-up of anyone affected by suicidal behaviors.

Please cite this article as: Samuel AV. Psychiatric practice in Kerala: current scenario and future directions. (Presidential address). Kerala Journal of Psychiatry 2022;35(2):85-87.

Suicide prevention requires coordinated action and collaboration among multiple sectors of the society.

The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) observes World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th. The theme of this year is "Creating Hope Through Action ". The Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS) will observe this day in a befitting manner as the beginning of our activities in this regard. We are planning to conduct a half-day training program for the psychiatrists and other stakeholders in this area. We will coordinate with the Psychiatric Guilds, Non-Governmental Organizations and Government Departments in suicide prevention activities by way of increasing awareness and promoting help-seeking behavior.

MENTAL HEALTHCARE ACT, 2017

We have got mixed feelings and strong reservations about this act. Now it is the law of the land. We must take proactive steps to ensure the proper implementation of this act in its true sense so that its benefits reach all our patients. Scientific understanding of Psychiatry should be addressed in all the statutory bodies like Mental Health Authority and Review Board. Stipulated minimum standards are required for different categories of mental health establishments. Whether we like it or not we need to reorient our clinical practice in line with the new MHCA.

QUACKERY

Mental health is one area where quacks are flourishing like anything. IPS will collaborate with Indian Medical Association (IMA) Anti Quackery Cell and other Government agencies to curtail this menace. We can take up activities to create better mental health awareness so that people will seek help from formally trained professionals. Our Media Psychiatrists are doing a lot in this regard.

LGBTQ

The future should focus on best practices and guiding principles used by Mental Health

Professionals toward the care of LGBTQ persons. Gender and sexuality exist in continuums with infinite possibilities. Each individual is unique and composed of multiple identities that exist within and interact with other socio-cultural realms. We should be sensitive to patients in transition. Beware that there is no basis for so-called "conversion or reparative" therapy which are unscientific attempts to change sexual orientation through shame-based efforts that result in anxiety, depression and suicidality. We have to work towards sensitization of medical and mental health professionals in restoring better health to LGBTQ People.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance abuse is alarmingly increasing among adolescents and young adults. Awareness programs and coordinated activities to prevent and treat this social evil are the need of the hour.

SCREEN ADDICTION

Various types of screen addiction are taking a heavy toll on all sections of society, more among students. This affects their physical health, mental health, family and social relations, education, career prospects, etc.

NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE

We are planning to come out with a Newsletter on a regular basis so that our members are informed about association activities and other professional issues. Our website is dormant at present and steps will be taken to revamp it at the earliest.

PROGRAMS IN PIPELINE

- September 10th World Suicide Prevention Day.
- October 10th World Mental Health Day and Media award distribution
- Training programs & psychotherapy workshop
 - Child Psychiatry
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Sexual Medicine
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

CONCLUSION

I express my deep gratitude to my Psychiatry teachers, Professor Dr. KA Kumar, et al. of Trivandrum Medical College. Thanks to my wife Komal, my children and especially to my grandchildren Nidhi, Annmaria and Nivedhia who gives me new insights into child psychology and parenting. Thanks are due to IMA Kollam Branch, ESI Doctors Association (KGIMOA), and Kollam Psychiatric Society with three Past Presidents of IPS – Dr. NS Jinen, Dr. Ravikumar K and Dr. Radhakrishnan MP. These forums groomed me in my journey till this point. Special congratulations to Professor Dr. James T Antony the winner of the Ernakulam Psychiatric Society Oration Award 2022 and all the other award winners.

Thanks and congratulations to Malappuram Psychiatric Guild President Dr. TM Raghuram, Secretary Dr. Manojkumar G, Organizing Chairman Dr. Ahammed Kutty K, Organizing Secretary Dr. Ashish Nair, Editor Dr. Ajith Premnath and all the Organizing Committee Members for the excellent manner in which they are conducting SIPSCON 2022 and throwing light to “twilight zones in psychiatry”.

Looking forward to an exciting, exacting and wonderful IPS year ahead with your support, guidance and wholehearted cooperation.

Thank you all for your valuable presence and patience.

Lokah Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu.