

MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS: THE WAY FORWARD

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Honourable Immediate Past President Dr. C. J. John, Chief Guest - Vice Chancellor of Kerala University of Health Sciences and past national president of Indian Academy of Paediatrics - Dr. M K C Nair, members of Executive Committee, my teachers, Life Fellows, members, ladies and gentlemen -

On this eve, I am immensely happy to say that when I am assuming the post of President, Branch of IPS (Kerala) is at its glorious days. One of our past presidents and our own Life Fellow, Dr. Roy Abraham Kallivayalil, has been elected as the Secretary General of World Psychiatric Association. Dr. E Mohandas has won the Excellence in Mentorship Award from World Federation of Societies of Biological Psychiatry. And I am proud to remind you all that IPS is hosting WPA Regional Congress at Kochi on September 25 to 27, 2015 with Dr. Kuruvilla Thomas as Organising Secretary.

At the outset, let me express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. C. J. John who with his vision, mission, modesty and skill led Branch of IPS (Kerala) to a newer, higher position which makes my task easier for the coming year.

The field of Psychiatry has witnessed new strides, and we now have evidence based data to claim that mental illnesses are diseases of the brain. On the other hand, the social, spiritual and environmental changes of current times are modifying our daily lives and leading to the creation of new behavioural disorders.

In the field of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, we have witnessed heart-breaking events and newer behavioural disorders. A significant portion of teenagers are showing poor academic performance. We need advanced treatment centres for children with learning disabilities and intellectual disability.

In Geriatric Psychiatry, the number of patients is increasing and a significant proportion of families in Kerala are facing the consequences. Though Psychiatrists are doing a tremendous work in this area, still we fail to give satisfactory relief to the sufferings of patients with major cognitive disorders or their caregivers.

Psychotic disorders are an area where most of us focus our treatment efforts. For disorders that require psychotherapies, centres with facilities for the same are not adequately developed here. When it comes to such psychosocial interventions, our state lacks reliable reference centres which follow the biopsychosocial paradigm and provide scientific treatments.

Other areas we are not adequately concentrating are addiction treatment and psychosocial rehabilitation of mentally ill. These areas are now mainly taken care of by Non-Governmental Organisations.

The field of Psychiatry is now growing faster than ever before. Number of medical colleges is increasing in Kerala, and so is the number of PG training centres in Psychiatry. We need to adequately utilise the services of new entrants to the speciality. Research papers can be published in the Kerala Journal of Psychiatry. The new generation of Psychiatrists can learn and master the techniques

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of scientific writing, publishing, peer reviewing etc. through this platform.

Awareness about psychiatric illnesses is increasing in Kerala society. The society has become more open to Psychiatrists, and this is reflected in the increase in the number of cases we see in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, geriatrics, sexual medicine, etc., and even in the number of those who seek our advice on day to day issues in their lives. On the other hand, the tendency to hide mental illnesses still persists in sections of our society. A significant

portion still seeks religious or magical relief at the first episode. This delays early detection, treatment and prevention of disabilities.

I am not elaborating. Ambitions have no bounds. Aspirations are many. The collective strength of Branch of IPS (Kerala) is indeed a force which will lead to a bright future.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us stand united in the task of setting up a platform that will be the envy of all.

Long live IPS. Thank you.

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