

BULLETIN

JUNE 2007

TSUYOSHI AKIYAMA, EDITOR

ALLAN TASMAN, PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It seems only a short time ago that the last issue of the Bulletin was sent to you; it has certainly been a busy several months.

As noted by our editor, this year is a period of several

major international meetings in our region. It was a pleasure to see some of you at the recent WPA meeting in Seoul. There were a number of presentations by our members, including an excellent symposium chaired by two of our board members, Professors Kua and Udomratn. I hope

to see many of you at the WPA meetings coming up in Shanghai and Melbourne, and we look forward eagerly to the PRCP board meeting coming at the Melbourne meeting in late November.

Work continues on our proposed journal, and we hope to have more news about this soon.

I am certain you will find much of interest in this new edition of the Bulletin, under the able editorship of Tsuyoshi Akiyama. An example of the new type of material is exemplified by the report he and Kumi Uehara prepared on the recent symposium "Current Status of Psychiatry in Asia:

Issues for Female Psychiatrists" held at the recent meeting of the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology. We plan to bring more such reports and articles to you in the journal as a new way of increasing international awareness and collaboration.

As we look forward to our next meeting in Tokyo in 2008, I would ask each of you to suggest membership to your colleagues. Enhancing our membership is another way we can better carry out our mission to increase collaboration in our region.

Have a good summer,

**Allan Tasman, MD,
PRCP President**

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT

Welcome to another edition of the PRCP Bulletin. I would like to invite



members, fellows and distinguished fellows to utilise the PRCP website for the promotion of their activities and meetings in their region. Please email the secretariat (info@prcp.org) with your information.

Thank you to the members, fellows and distinguished fellows who have finalised their 2007 membership dues. However, the PRCP currently still has a substantial amount outstanding in membership dues. Reminder invoices have been sent by mail this month.

Members, fellows and distinguished fellows of the PRCP are encouraged to take an active part in two coming significant regional conferences this year. The WPA Regional Meeting will be held in Shanghai (20-23 September

2007; see

www.wpa2007shanghai.com).

The WPA International Congress will be hosted in Melbourne 28 November - 2 December 2007. The PRCP Board is planning to have a meeting at the WPA International Congress in Melbourne. For more information, you can visit the website at <http://www.wpa2007melbourne.com/>.

As mentioned in the last issues of the PRCP Bulletin the Secretariat has requested the services of a taxation firm to address the taxation requirements associated with the PRCP receiving donations and grants to undertake key projects in the future. Such a mechanism would enable the PRCP to pursue future research and educational projects that can benefit the PRCP and enhance our role in the region. A report has been circulated to the PRCP Board members for their comments which will be collated by the PRCP Secretariat. With best wishes,

Associate Professor Chee Ng



From left: Prof Ming Been Lee PRCP Board Member, Prof Fumitaka Noda PRCP President Elect, Prof Masahisa Nishizono, Prof Allan Tasman, PRCP President. Photo taken at 12th PRCP Scientific Meeting Taiwan Japan

**The 13th PRCP
Scientific Meeting
Tokyo, Japan
30 Oct - 2 Nov 2008
<http://prcp2008.org/>**

EDITOR'S REPORT

Spring is a good season for conferences. Between April 18th and 21st, the Korean



Neuropsychiatric Association hosted a WPA regional meeting for the first time in Korea.

The diversity and the quality of the scientific programs were outstanding, and the organization of the conference was impeccable with Korean smiles. The international participants were fascinated with the rapid development of Korean psychiatry and the profoundness of the Korean hospitality and culture. A more detailed report is provided by Dr. Tae-Yeon Hwang.

Between April 27th and 29th, there was the first conjoint meeting among the Japanese Society of Transcultural Psychiatry, the WPA-Transcultural Psychiatry Section and the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry. This conference created a very good opportunity for the Japanese and international colleagues to exchange their perspectives regarding various culture-related issues and many unique practices. Prof. Fumitaka Noda, Prof. Ronald Wintrob and Prof. Wen-Shing Tseng provided wonderful leadership, as chairs of the three organizations. Prof. Noda is providing a more extensive report. Exactly at the same time, between April 27th and 29th, four prominent Japanese psychiatrists, Prof. Takuya Kojima, Prof. Yuji Okazaki, Prof.

Yoshifumi Watanabe and Prof. Masayoshi Kurachi visited Thailand and had a conjoint academic meeting with the Psychiatric Association of Thailand. We will have a report on this meeting in the September bulletin by Prof. Pichet Udomratn.

Between May 17th and 19th, the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology invited six young psychiatrists from India, Taiwan, Korea and Mongol. These psychiatrists participated in an international symposium and an international session with young Japanese psychiatrists. Dr. Kumi Ueahara is reporting on the international symposium "Current Status of Psychiatry in Asia: Issues for Female Psychiatrists."

Finally, between May 19th and 24th, the American Psychiatric Association held its 160th conference in San Diego. While retaining its superb scientific quality, recently there seems to be more of a clinical or practical orientation as well. Prof. Francis Lu will give us a more detailed report.

Separate from the conferences, in this issue you will find reports on "Senior Peer Counseling" by Prof. Kua Ee Heok and "Seoul Mental Health 2020; the new community mental health plan for better services" by Dr. Myung Soo Lee, both of which are innovative programs in the region. Also Prof. Masahisa Nishizono is writing about "The Joint Workshop for Psychiatric Residents of Japan and Korea," which Prof. Nishizono and Dr. Byung

Kun Min have been conducting. This is an excellent example of collaborative training project, started since 2000, with their dedication to the improvement of training of psychiatric residents. You will also enjoy reading the mood disorder award paper "Elderly Suicide and the 2003 SARS Epidemic in Hong Kong" by Dr. Sau Man Sandra Chan.

In order to improve this bulletin, I received a few suggestions from the board, which included the creation of a column for young psychiatrists to share their experiences and information on their training, a column for the teachers or trainers to share information about their teaching programs, a forum to discuss possible research collaborations around the region, and a column for young psychiatrists who will be presenting at the meeting in Shanghai in September to describe their work. I am making a welcome announcement for these articles.

Please contact me at akiyama@sa2.so-net.ne.jp to provide any additional suggestions. YOU can make this bulletin a better forum for communication and collaboration among the members.

With warmest regards and most sincerely,

Dr Tsuyoshi Akiyama

**World Psychiatric Association International Congress 2007 in Melbourne Australia
28 November - 2 December 2007**

**Working Together for Mental Health Partnerships for Policy and Practice
Hosted by the**

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

www.wpa2007melbourne.com

MOOD DISORDER AWARD

Elderly Suicide and the 2003 SARS Epidemic in Hong Kong

International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry 2006; 21: 113-118
Sau Man Sandra Chan, Fung Kum Helen Chiu, Chiu Wah Linda Lam, Pui Yiu Vivian Leung and Yeates Conwell

Background

Hong Kong was struck by the community outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003. In the same year, the elderly suicide rate in Hong Kong showed a sharp upturn from a previous downward trend.

Methods

Secondary analyses using Poisson Regression Models on the suicide statistics from the Census and Statistics Department of the Hong Kong Government were performed.

Results

In a Poisson Regression Model on the annual suicide rates in elders aged 65 and over in years 1986-2003, 2002 served as the reference year. Suicide

rates in 1986-1997 were significantly higher than the reference year, with an Incident Rate Ratio (IRR) of 1.34 to 1.61. However, rates in 1998-2001 did not differ from the reference year significantly, representing stabilization of suicide rates for 4 years after 1997. The elderly suicide rate increased to 37.46/100,000 in 2003, with an IRR of 1.32 ($p=0.0019$) relative to 2002. Such trend is preserved when female elderly suicide rates in 1993-2003 were analysed, while suicide rates in elderly men and younger age groups did not follow this pattern. **Discussions** Mechanistic factors such as breakdown of social network and limited access to health care might account for the findings. These factors could have potentiated biopsychosocial risk factors for suicide at individual levels, particularly in elderly. Female elders, by way of their previous readiness to utilize social and health services

instituted in the past decade, are thus more susceptible to the effects of temporary suspension of these services during the SARS epidemic.

Conclusions

The SARS epidemic was associated with increased risk of completed suicide in female elders, but not in male elders or population under 65 years of age. Copyright © 2006 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Dr Sau Man Sandra Chan



Dr Sandra Chan is an Assistant Professor with the Dept of Psychiatry, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She was the recipient of the Mood Disorders Research award at the 12th PRCP Scientific Meeting.

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS OR PROPOSALS

Korea-Japan Training Seminar

The Joint Workshop for Psychiatric Residents of Japan and Korea

Exchanges between Japanese and Korean youths are believed to be vitally necessary for promoting the two countries future mutual understanding and cooperation. Drs. Byung Kun Min, a Fellow of the PRCP, the Director of the Institute of Neuropsychiatry, Keyo Medical Foundation, Korea, and Masahisa Nishizono have launched a Joint Workshop with the aim of passing on the fruits of their longstanding friendship and academic interchanges even in severe complicated situation to young psychiatrists. Since 2000, yearly meetings have been held in Fukuoka, Japan and Seoul, Korea. A number of people have supported our objectives and cooperated with the project, including Dr. Yunoshin Sasaki of Fukuma Hospital, Japan, and Dr. Kyu Hang Lee, a president-past of the

PRCP, the chairman of Keyo Medical Foundation. As it is shown in following table, a total of seven joint workshops have been held so far.

1st; 2000, 8.20~24 Fukuoka 2nd; 2001, 8.17~21 Seoul 3rd; 2002, 8.2~6 Fukuoka Future of Psychiatry in Japan



& Korea under Globalization 4th; 2003, 8.14~18 Seoul Psychiatry and "Crisis of the World" 5th; 2004, 7.26~30 Fukuoka How to Prevent Increasing of Depression 6th; 2005, 7.14~18 Seoul Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 7th; 2006, 8.17~21 Fukuoka Developmental Disorders/Personality (Developmental Disorder)

They last 5 days and 4 nights, during

which lectures, small-group discussions, case conferences, small-group discussions, case conferences, hospital visits and evening events are held. The participants from both countries were surprised to learn of the similarities in their countries cultures concerning the practice of psychiatry, and were also intrigued by differences. Some of those who have taken part in our Joint Workshop have continued to exchange information by e-mail.

The 8th Joint Workshop will be held at Busan and Gyeongju, Korea, 23-27 August, '07 under main theme of "Shilla Culture and Psychiatry."

Masahisa Nishizono, M.D.
Institute for Psychosocial Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis,
Fukuoka, Japan

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

WPA-TPS, JSTP, WACP Kamakura Conference April 2007

Everybody who visits Japan hopes to have an opportunity to see Mt Fuji. However, from spring through summer, Mt. Fuji can be moody. She often hides behind the deep clouds and rarely shows her beautiful features.

From April 27 to 29, 2007, a joint meeting of the Japanese Society of Transcultural Psychiatry/JSTP (chaired by Dr. Fumitaka Noda), World Psychiatric Association-Transcultural Psychiatry Section/WPA-TPS (chaired by Dr. Ronald Wintrob) and World Association of Cultural Psychiatry/WACP (chaired by Dr. Wen-Shing Tseng) was held at the Shonan Village Centre. The Centre is spread across the top of a hill, a few miles from Kamakura, from which vantage point visitors can have a panoramic view of Mt. Fuji, across Sagami Bay, if the weather is ideal. And for three days during the Joint Meeting, we were just blessed by God (or at least it seemed so). The weather was so fine and mild and the air so crystal-clear, that every conference participant could enjoy a gorgeous view of Mt. Fuji from the hilltop of Shonan Village, which, as an additional bonus, was covered in fully blossoming azaleas. The scene from the hilltop was breathtaking; as the accompanying photo shows.



There were more than 200 participants at the Kamakura Joint Meeting, from all over the world. They were attracted to Kamakura for this conference at an ideal time of year in Japan and to the main conference theme of "the new era of transcultural psychiatry: advancing collaboration of East and West".

The scientific program of the Joint Meeting included three plenary symposia, four special lectures, three film sessions, 28 topic symposia and 21 poster presentations. Those sessions covered various aspects of the conference theme, such as



multiculturalism, the psychological and social trauma of war, post-conflict reconciliation, psychiatric emergencies, alcohol dependence and abuse, cultural psychiatry issues in Asian countries, and also in Latin American countries, women's issues, HIV and gender, social work, religion, globalization, psychotherapy, media issues and healing techniques.

Each of the three sponsoring organizations presented one plenary session. WPA-TPS organized the first plenary symposium; "Toward multiculturalism: is biculturalism possible?". The symposium was chaired by Dr. Wintrob and included presentations by Drs. Kamaldeep Bhui from the UK, Racid Bennegadi from France, John De Figueiredo from U.S.A and Wen-Shing Tseng from U.S.A, each of whom gave compelling accounts of their personal and professional life experiences of biculturalism and multiculturalism. The second plenary symposium; "Culture-related specific psychiatric syndromes: Asian examples" was organized by WACP and chaired by Dr. Sung Kil Ming from Korea and Dr. Tseng. Presentations were made by Drs. Ming and Tseng and by Dr. Shuich Katsuragawa from Japan! The third plenary symposium; "Trauma and culture" was developed by JSTP. The symposium was chaired by myself and Dr. Keisuke Tsuji from Japan.

Presentations were made by Drs. Akari Watanabe from Japan, Agnieszka Ederveen from the Netherlands, David Kinzie from U.S.A. and Michiko Ohyama from Japan.

Two special lectures were given by Canadian speakers with close connections to Asia. Mr. Tatsuo Kage discussed a subject few conference participants were familiar with; "Redress for the wartime incarceration of Japanese Canadians: intergenerational conflict and cooperation" that gave the audience new awareness of the intense humiliation and psychological turmoil caused by the internment of Canadian citizens of Japanese background, and of legal immigrants to Canada from Japan, during the years of the Second World War. Dr. Soma Ganesan proposed a new aspect of cross cultural psychiatric formulation through his presentation by showing DVD in which real adaptation process of a African refugee family to Canada was



vividly expressed and interpreting what is needed to help them adjust to different cultures.

The conference's keynote speaker, Dr. Masashi Nishizono of Japan, gave a presentation on "Globalization and the meaning of psychiatry", in which he introduced the history and new movement of transcultural psychiatry in Japan and suggested how it could contribute to the advancement of global transcultural mental health! Another unusual and fascinating lecture was given for conference participants, and made available to the public as an open forum. The speaker was Bishop Daishin

Adachi, of the Engakuji Zen temple in Kamakura. He talked about the concrete application of concepts of Zen Buddhism by describing them as "a Cosmos of kokoro (mind)". The conference hall was filled to capacity for Bishop Adachi's presentation.

In the numerous topic symposia, there was a wide range of cultural psychiatry concerns addressed by



the presentations, generating active exchanges of ideas in the discussion periods that followed symposium presentations. Participants told us that they were very satisfied with the quality and breadth of symposium topics and individual presentations.

Although the venue was located in

an isolated and bit remote area from the town, people seemed to be enjoying the atmosphere of resort life and reunions of old friends.

Quite a few people seemed to get out of the site from time to time to visit temples, shrines and traditional gardens in Kamakura. At the Gala, local Hayama-drum was performed and showed the audience a glimpse of traditional Japanese art culture.

Farewell party was held at a Marina of Hayama harbour. People enjoyed good seafood and short time cruise by a boat. Maori guests from New Zealand sang a very beautiful song for us. Towards the closing of party, sun was setting over the ocean and just beside Fuji Mountain. All colours were changing blue to red and silhouette. This scenery was just astoundingly holy.

I hope everybody returned to his/her home town from the Kamakura conference with re-invigorated inspiration to continue their interest and activity in cultural aspects of psychiatry, as well as with positive

memories of their visit to Japan and warm feelings of friendship. That was what our local organizing committee and I, as chair of this joint meeting, aimed at.

You can review some of the content of the conference and see many of



the beautiful photos of the three day event on the Internet conference site, at; <http://www.shonan-village.co.jp/wpatcp.htm> from July through next June.

With warmest regards,

Fumitaka Noda, M.D.

Chair of JSTP+WPATPS+WACP
Joint Meeting in Kamakura, Japan

Senior Peer Counselling

The challenges confronting many Asian countries in the next decade is the ageing of the population and the lack of resources to cope with the demand for healthcare. Depression is the commonest mental health problem in old age; it affects the quality of life of the person, increases the economic burden and may even lead to suicidal tendency.

In a Singapore study, the prevalence of depressive disorder in the Chinese elderly was 5.7% (Kua, 1992) and loneliness was a significant factor (69.2%). Most psychiatric clinics in Asia are overcrowded and the few psychiatrists or psychologists do not have sufficient time to provide a satisfactory counselling service for elderly patients with depression. Because of a dearth of mental health professionals, we felt it would be appropriate and necessary to train retired teachers, doctors or nurses as peer counsellors for depressed elderly especially those with mild depression and no suicidal ideation.

A course to train senior citizens as counsellors was introduced 5 years ago. Dr Martha Chiu, a senior clinical psychologist from Stanford University, and I planned the programme. Components of the course included

lectures on topics like ageing, relationships in old age, aetiology and symptomatology of depression, bereavement, cultural issues in illness and therapy, crisis intervention, ethics and techniques of counselling. Skill learning was from demonstration by course leaders, role play, video feedback and experiential group.

The course emphasised the relief of emotional distress by psychological methods and the primacy of communication in the healing or therapeutic relationship. The counselling helped to identify and modify cause and consequence of behaviour of the elderly person that created distress. Correcting faulty cognition would enhance self confidence and social competence. The counselling helped to explain the condition, clarify methods of improving or dealing with the problem and provided an opportunity for catharsis.

The 3-month short course was organised fortnightly and there was regular feedback and review with the twenty four trainees. The trainees were volunteers in day centres and the programme helped to enhance their skills and self-esteem. We met these trainees regularly to mentor and to assist them in their clients or patients.

A study to ascertain the outcome of elderly depressed patients managed by peer counsellors has been planned.

The prognosis of depressive disorder with treatment is not bleak. An outpatient naturalistic study comparing elderly depressed patients on antidepressant medications plus psychotherapy versus psychotherapy showed that 72% of patients on the former regime recovered compared to 62% on psychotherapy alone (Kua 2000). The consequences of untreated depression include suffering and despair, increased medical morbidity and utilization of medical services, inappropriate institutionalisation and caregiver burden.

REFERENCE Kua EH. A community study of Mental Disorders in elderly Singaporean Chinese using the GMS-AGECAT package. *Australian and New Zealand J Psychiatry* 1992; 26: 502-506.

Kua EH. Pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy in the Treatment of Depression in the Elderly. *Singapore Medical Journal*. 2000; March (supp) 35-36.

Prof Kua Ee Heok,
MBBS(Mal), MD(S'pore), FRCPsych(UK)
Head, Dept of Psychological Medicine,
National University Singapore

New Community Mental Health Plan in Seoul

Seoul Mental Health 2020 ; the new community mental health plan for better services.

The community mental health service for the chronic serious mental illness was started since 1994 in Seoul city. In 1995 the mental health legislation was enacted and in the same year, the first community mental health center of Korea was established in Seoul.

During the last 10 years in Seoul city, it was true that the community service systems for the people with chronic mental illness was developed, but at the same time it was also true we definitely had experienced some stubborn problems to solve.

1. The failure to establish basic infrastructure for the mental health services. - The area coverage rate by community mental health centers was just 32%

2. The failure to diversify the service providing ; failure to meet consumer's needs. - Only 19 day care facilities and 8 group homes for 10,000,000 general populations. - An absolute shortage of vocational rehabilitation facilities - Lack of community - based crisis intervention services.

3. The failure to make integration of services

- Failure to make delivery system caused confusions among service providers

In 2004, Seoul city government had launched the "Seoul Mental Health 2020" project to renew the mental health systems of Seoul city and to spearhead the development of the mental health across the nation.

The above issues were mainly based on the low priority of city government, so the major purpose of "Seoul mental health 2020" was to make evidences of the new input for the better services. The better service systems are in pursuit of facilitating de-hospitalization, settle down community-based crisis intervention system and re-integration of pre-existing community mental health services for the better outcomes through collaborative networks.

We estimated the number of target populations who need community mental health services such as residential services, day program and case management with former research evidences. And then we estimated the number of infrastructures in need such as group home, social rehabilitation facilities and community mental health centers. Undoubtedly there were gaps between those estimations and real situations. Based on these gaps, we

clarified the goals for every 4 years period to 2020.

This year is the third year of the first period (2005~2008), the coverage rate of community mental health centers has increased to 68%(17 of 25 districts) and we are now providing new 225 community-based residential beds (25% of unmet needs) for facilitating social integration of people with mental illness. Since 2005, two metropolitan level's organizations were started according to Seoul 2020 project. The one is 'Seoul Mental Health Consulting and Advisory Council' for education, evaluation, research, policy making and so on, and the other is Seoul Metropolitan Mental Health Center for 24 hour crisis intervention, making and monitoring delivery system between hospital and community and within community, mental health prevention and promotion, and so on.

Seoul mental health 2020 was an epoch-making project and the progresses are even forwards in some parts, however it is also true that we need more detailed action plans to achieve our goals successfully in the near future.

Myung Soo Lee M.D.

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Column for Young Psychiatrists. The bulletin editor welcomes articles for a column for young psychiatrists to share their experiences and information on their training, a column for the teachers or trainers to share information about their teaching programs, a forum to discuss possible

research collaborations around the region, and a column for young psychiatrists who will be presenting at the meeting in Shanghai in September to describe their work. Please send your articles addressed to me at akiyama@sa2.so-net.ne.jp.

World Psychiatric Association International Congress 2007

Melbourne Australia 28 November - 2 December 2007

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www.wpa2007melbourne.com

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

WPA Seoul 2007

The meeting was held in Lotte Hotel World in downtown Seoul through Apr.18 –21, 2007 under the theme of 'Science and Human' organized by Korean Neuropsychiatric Association (KNPA). The organizing committee was directed by Dr. Young-Cho Chung, president of KNPA and co-chaired by Dr. Pedro Ruiz. Dr. Jun Soo Kwon chaired the scientific committee with 21 international and local members. The meeting was successful with 1,666 participants including 467 from 39 nations all around the world beyond Asian-Pacific Region. Among them are 43 Japanese, 2 Iranian, and 18 Taiwanese. This meeting tried to integrate recently developed biological aspects of psychiatry and psychosocial, humanitarian aspects for the future that academic activities were plentiful with 298 research posters, 6 plenary sessions, 30 symposia, and 11 ISS symposia. The Scientific committee selected 20 from poster presentation and gave US\$500 travel award. Participants

enjoyed welcome reception with Korean traditional music and modern B-boys performance. Gala dinner was just like Traditional Costume Festival with volunteers who wore national costumes of their country followed by Korean folk dances and marshal art.

Along with WPA Regional Meeting, there were two satellite meetings. One was Asian Young Psychiatrists Meeting organized by Dr. Tae-Yeon Hwang of Yongin WHO Collaborating Center. Dr. Norman Sartorius, Dr. Tsuyoshi Akiyama, Dr. Hwang and 40 young psychiatrists enjoyed symposium, poster and oral presentation. This will be going on with network between young doctors through other regional meeting. Another is World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation (WAPR) Regional meeting on Apr. 20. This is the first regional meeting in Asia and more than 300 mental health professionals including psychiatric nurses, social workers and clinical psychologists joined the meeting.

Even though this was a regional meeting in Asia, its magnitude, contents and programs were comparable with international meeting that all the participants congratulated the successful and enjoyable meeting in Seoul. For KNPA, this meeting demanded much time and energies of the members to organize, but gave a good opportunity to draw attention from the world to the academic achievement of KNPA and provided momentum to collaborate with other WPA members for research, education and exchange clinical experiences.

**Summarized by
Dr. Tae-Yeon Hwang,
Director of Mental Health of
KNPA and Director of WHO
Collaborating Center for
Psychosocial Rehabilitation,
Yongin Mental Hospital**

APA Annual Meeting San Diego

The 160th American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting was held in San Diego, California, between May 19 and 24, 2007. The theme of the meeting, "Addressing Patient Needs: Access, Parity, and Humane Care," was set by President Pedro Ruiz, MD. The APA Council on Global Psychiatry sponsored a component workshop entitled "Focusing on Asia: A Review of Disasters, Intervention and Prevention Programs" co-chaired by Pedro Ruiz, MD, and Bruce S. Singh, MD. Participants included Pichet Udomratn, MD, Parameshvara Deva, MD, and Tsuyoshi Akiyama, MD. PRCP President Allan Tasman, MD, co-chaired a symposium on "Psychiatric Training Across the Continents:

International Young Psychiatrist Perspectives." PRCP Treasurer Francis Lu, MD, chaired several sessions including a media session "Personal Transformation Through an Encounter with Death: Akira Kurosawa's Ikiru," which he also presented at the JSTP+WPA-TPS+WACP Joint Meeting in Kamakura, Japan in late April, 2007.

More information about the Annual Meeting is available at this website: http://psych.org/edu/ann_mtgs/am/07/index.cfm. Especially useful material can be found by clicking on these sections: APA Daily Bulletin Online, Scientific Program Schedule, New Research Abstracts, NIDA (National Institute for Drug Abuse)

Program Track and News Release, Sessions on Cultural Diversity Issues in Psychiatry. The 2008 Annual Meeting will be in Washington, DC, May 3 to 8. Deadline for most submissions is September 4, 2007; see www.psych.org. For further information, contact Francis Lu, MD, at francislumd@aol.com.

Francis G Lu, MD

YOUNG PSYCHIATRIST SECTION

103rd congress of the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology

International Symposium at the 103rd congress of the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology

Recently, the number of female psychiatrists has been increasing and there seems to be such a need throughout the world. Female psychiatrists face certain challenges uniquely or more intensely than male psychiatrists. This international symposium was organized to illustrate the current status of female psychiatrists and to discuss a better future in Asian countries. We had four female speakers from India, Korea and Japan.

Dr. Yayoi Koizumi, the first speaker from Japan, reported that in 2005, 33.7% of graduate doctors in Japan were female and this trend is predicted to continue. However, she felt there have not been many studies exploring potential differences between male and female psychiatrists. She shared some findings in western countries which indicate there are several issues regarding gender differences. Unfortunately there have been very few reports in Asian countries. She concluded her presentation with a proposal to implement a collaborative study in Asian countries.

Dr. Ruksheda Syeda, the second speaker from India, shared her experiences as a psychiatrist. India is known as a multicultural, multilingual and multifaceted country. She mentioned that in India psychiatrists have to take into consideration various factors such as religion, language, economic status and traditional

customs. She also reported that in India, becoming a doctor is considered not only a social accomplishment but also a significant financial advantage for a family. However, there is a strong expectation for female doctors to take care of their home and family, while at the same time fulfilling their professional responsibilities.

Dr. HaKyoung Kim, the third speaker showed results of a survey among young Korean psychiatrists. After she confirmed the increasing number of female psychiatrists in Korea, she speculated the reason as being the influence of an increasing number of professional women in Korea as a whole, and also to some attributed characteristics in psychiatry such as better gender-equality and less sexual discrimination. But she attested that there are still difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities for female psychiatrists.

The last speaker, Dr. Saya Kikuchi, from Japan, showed results of a survey from the Japan Young Psychiatrists Organization. The survey was implemented to reveal work conditions, attitude towards work and attitude towards personal life including childcare, and orientation for future.

While male and female psychiatrists reported equally severe working condition, more females preferred to change their work style after childbirth. Moreover, female psychiatrists reported that they had taken into consideration the future need of child rearing when they chose psychiatry as their career. She concluded by emphasizing the importance of balancing between family

matters and work.

Obviously there were similarities among three countries concerning the female specific issues, that is, the balance between family and work and the responsibility of child rearing.

We hope that this symposium makes a first significant step to discuss issues of female psychiatrists in Asia. In the future, there should be more international, collaborative studies, which not only reveal the current status but also show us a way to lead to a better working situation for both male and female psychiatrists.

Dr. Kumi Uehara

Yokohama City University Hospital, Department of Psychiatry



Dr. Tsuyoshi Akiyama

Kanto Medical Center, Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology

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