WPA - Section Psychiatry of Mental Retardation

WPA-SPMR NEWSLETTER: A FURTHER INSTRUMENT FOR THE SECTION

A field in which the sections can bring a substantial contribution to WPA activity is the information. They can furnish specific scientific materials and news on activities in the different areas of psychiatry. Since the increasing psychiatrist need of saving time and dealing with a huge variety of news, most actual media for the diffusion of information have to be rapidly and easily readable and transmissible. As well as the WEB site page, the newsletter meet these new need of the information. It was expected to be produced by most active sections within the WPA. This newsletter will be published 4 times a year and will contain information on the past and future activities and organisation of the section, but also summaries of most relevant scientific findings and experts opinions. It can be sent as an attached pdf file trough e-mail, printed, and read like a 4 pages newspaper. This very first number has to be considered a pilot one:

2004 - 05 ACTIVITIES

Activities of 2004 started with the participation to the NADD fifth international congress, held in Boston in February. The section was chosen for the co-patronage of the event and for a pre-conference symposium on conceptual challenges of Mental Retardation. Here Prof. Salvador-Carulla, Prof. Weber, Dr. Bertelli and Prof. La Malfa proposed an update on the concept and classification of MR, challenging behaviour and psychiatric disorders in intellectual disability.

The section hold two board meetings in 2004. The first in Montpellier (France) on June 15th and the second in Florence (Italy) on November 13th.

The presence at the WPA International Congress "Treatments in Psychiatry. An update", held in Florence (Italy) on November 10-13, was quite considerable and articulated in three symposia. One of these was Intersectoral, organised and conducted together with the section on Mental Health Economics. Details of these three symposia are available at page 3.

In 2004 it was difficult to carry out research activities due to the lack of funding or any financial support. The WPA section will keep on providing its support to any related organisation with a financial structure such as the Italian Society on Research on Mental retardation (SIRM).

A major effort has been done in 2004 in order to increase cooperation with other WPA sections. Besides the one with the section on Mental Health Economics, the section has established another important cooperation with the WPA Diagnosis and Classification section. A joint symposium was held at the WPA Athens Congress and another one has been organised for the WPA El Cairo Congress (September 2005).


Educational programme for update in Mental Retardation in Spain (2002) co-sponsored by WPA. Plans to expand it to Latin-america through the WPA Educational program under the responsibility of Dr R. Novell. This educational program requires the agreement of the editing company (Aula Medica) in order to provide free on-line access to the educational material. This process is ongoing.

The section has completed the translation of the ABC Mental Health in Mental Retardation into Spanish (www. Aeecrm. com) which
has already been sent to the Secretary for Publications. A translation into Italian is already available and another one into Chinese will be prepared for 2005. In 2005 The Section will prepare a position statement on the name of Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disability.

Dr. Henry Wai Ming Kwok has attended the 1st Asia-Pacific Congress of IASSID (June 12-15, Taipei - Taiwan) on behalf of the section. He gave a keynote speech titled ‘Medical and Mental Health Care for people with ID: Past, Present and Future’ and also acted as moderator in a plenary. The same Dr. Wai Ming Kwok is also collecting opinions on the Core Curriculum for medical students.

THE FIFTH EUROPEAN CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN MENTAL RETARDATION

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the European Association for Mental Health in Mental Retardation (EAMHMR) I cordially invite you to participate in the 5th Congress of the EAMHMR on October 6-8th 2005 Barcelona, Spain.

Over the last decades interest in mental health aspects in people with intellectual disabilities has increased. The activities of the EAMHMR, especially through its earlier congresses in Amsterdam, London, Berlin and Rome, have contributed greatly to this development. Moreover, these congresses were wonderful opportunities to meet colleagues and strengthen personal relationships. I am sure the next congress in Barcelone, taking place on the beach of the Mediterranean Sea, will provide the excellent conditions for a successful event. Our Spanish colleagues, responsible for organising the event, will certainly do a commendable job and we should extend our appreciation with our participation – as both audience and presenters.

Our bi-annual congress is a useful venue for exchanging scientific ideas and presenting new results. It encourages the people working in this field to continue their scientific and practical efforts. From my point of view, issues of mental health regarding people with intellectual disabilities, are not only a fascinating topic, but also has great significance as part of human rights. Mental health as a component of general health care is an important prerequisite for successful social participation for people with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, promoting good mental health is essential aspects in our activities throughout Europe - as social care professionals, communities and policy decision makers. I assume that mental health in people with intellectual disabilities - in contrast to the increasing scientific interest in this field - is often neglected - both in the daily practice when providing care as well as in the legal and organisational framework of that daily work. It is our obligation to contribute to this inappropriate situation by changing it as soon as possible.

Looking forward to meet you in Barcelone in October 2005.

M.SEIDEL
President of EAMHMR

CURRENT ADVANCES IN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (MENTAL RETARDATION)
(by Prof. Luis Salvador-Carulla)

Major changes have occurred in the field of research in People with Intellectual Disabilities (PWID) in the last five years. Main topics of interest are: 1) Terminology and underlying concept of ID/MR. A great international debate on the name and on the intelligence-based approach to mental retardation has taken place since 1999 on. The debate has been particularly intense in the USA where the American Association of Mental Retardation (AAMR) produced a series of interesting documents on this issue, the President Commission on Excellence in Special Education questioned the IQ testing as a diagnostic tool, and the Committee on “Mental Retardation” changed its name to “People with Intellectual Disabilities” in 2003. As an alternative, medical oriented terminology such as Early Cognitive Deficit (ECD) has been suggested. 2) Psychiatric assessment: the development of standardised assessment tools as well as modified diagnostic criteria for PWID resulted in major progress in diagnosis and assessment of PWID particularly in the USA and UK. 3) Behavioural phenotypes. This is the area of research where major advances have taken place in the last five years. It is relevant for it me become a model for psychiatric genetics and has relevant implications for other areas of research such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorders. 4) New treatment strategies. Psychopharmacology studies in PWID increased in the last years filling a vacuum in evidence research practice in this area. 5) Education and training: Given the lack of trained staff in this area, new strategies include e-learning and development of training material within a global perspective. 6) Service research and health economics. The advances in this area are particularly relevant in regions where major reforms are underway such as Eastern Europe or the expanded European Union which faces the challenges of harmonisation and integration of ID care within the health care system.
SECTION SYMPOSIA AT FIRENZE 2004

At the WPA International Congress “Treatments in Psychiatry. An update”, held in Florence (Italy) on November 10-13 2004, the WPA-SMR symposia were structured as follows.


Symposium title: “The hidden burden of Mental Retardation” (Organized by the WPA sections on Mental Health Economics and Mental Retardation; chairmen: M. Moscarelli and L. Salvador-Carulla). Presentations: The magnitude and burden of mental retardation [JM Bertolote (WHO)]; Consumption and outcomes of mental health services for people with mental retardation [N. Bouras et al. (UK)]; International research on mental healthcare systems for people with care policy [L. Salvador-Carulla (Spain)]

Symposium title: *New Strategies for the care of the Mentally Retarded* (chairman: N. Bouras)

Presentations: Assessment, diagnosis and treatment of schizophrenia spectrum disorders in people with intellectual disabilities [N. Bouras (UK)]; Usefulness of the Description and Evaluation of Services for Disabilities (DESDE) for mapping and planning services for intellectual disabilities in Spain [L. Salvador-Carulla (Spain)]; Psychiatric services for people with mental retardation. The Hong Kong experience [H. Kwok (Hong-Kong)]; Therapeutic interventions in the management of mental disorders associated with the autistic spectrum [G. Holt (UK)].


Prevalence of intellectual disability and comorbid mental illness in an Australian community sample

Objective: The aim of this study was to bring to light the high prevalence of Australians affected by intellectual disability and comorbid serious mental illnesses. Results from a broad scale study are used to explore the reasons for this regularly overlooked phenomenon. Methods: This study was based on secondary analysis of data collected in the national ‘Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey, 1998’. The analysed data consisted of an Australian wide sample of 42,664 individuals living at home or in cared accommodation. Classification of intellectual disability and comorbid psychosis, anxiety and depressive disorder was based on the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision (ICD-10). Results: The prevalence of intellectual disability in the sampled population was 1.25%. Of these people 1.3% had a psychotic disorder, 8% had a depressive disorder and 14% had an anxiety disorder that had been present for at least 6 months and was of such severity that it too was disabling. Conclusions: Findings indicate that people with intellectual disability are at high risk of developing comorbid serious mental illness. Dual diagnosis is however, often overlooked due to difficulties associated with establishing a diagnosis of a mental disorder in people with an intellectual disability, a problem which is heightened when the individual’s capacity to participate in a clinical assessment is limited.

PSYCHIATRY OF ID ACROSS THE WORLD: GREECE

Gerasimos Kolaitis, MD, Stavroula Diareme, PhD, John Tsiantis, MD
Department of Child Psychiatry, «Aghia Sophia» Children’s Hospital and Association for the Psychosocial Health of Children and Adolescents (APHCA), Athens, Greece

The mental health needs of people with intellectual disabilities have not been adequately addressed in many countries. Poor mental health of these people can be a barrier to their effective social integration. Care staff usually lack the knowledge to recognize signs and symptoms in people whom they care for and refer them to mental health professionals. Purpose: This study, which was implemented within the framework of the European MEROPE project, a 3-year project entitled «Standardizing Criteria for Mental Health in Adults with Mental Retardation», evaluated a care staff programme aiming at improving their awareness on dual diagnosis. Thirtysix care staffs from both residential and community settings in Greece received a training based on the British Mental Health in Learning Disabilities Training Pack and the PAS-ADD Checklist. The vast majority of staff were very satisfied with the training, especially those from institutional work settings, with no previous training and with a lower educational level. Changes occurred mostly in their knowledge and attitudes rather than practice.

Conclusions: The positive findings of this study indicate the potential usefulness of the particular training package for care staff of various Greek mental health facilities. Supervised practical training at the worksite should be a valuable supplement to the training package.

Care staff usually lack the knowledge to recognize signs and symptoms in people whom they care for.
The Scientific Committee of the WPA XIII World Congress of Psychiatry to be held in El Cairo (Egypt), has accepted the following symposia proposed by the WPA-SPMR.

Symposium title: "Intellectual Disabilities (ID): advances in psychiatric diagnosis and assessment" (chairperson: S. Cooper; co-chairperson: C. E. Berganza).

Presentations: DSM-IV/NADD Diagnostic criteria in people with intellectual disabilities, An Update (M. B. First); Diagnostic Classification in ID. Usefulness and limitations of a new multiaxial classification system for psychiatric standard diagnosis in people with intellectual disabilities (S. A. Cooper); Assessment of behavioural phenotypes in people with intellectual Disabilities (T. Holland); Autism, intellectual disability and psychopathology: Issues in assessment and training (E. A. Bradley).

Symposium title: "ID: advances in training for mental health problems" (chairperson: N. Bouras; co-chairperson: L. Salvador-Carulla).

Presentations: Feasibility and Usefulness of e-learning in Mental Health and Mental Retardation. An update (J. Torr); Current innovations for mental health training in mental retardation (G. Holt); Care staff awareness training on issues of mental health in learning disabilities; results from a greek programme (J. Tsianis); Training in Mental Health and Mental Retardation (M. Bertelli).


Presentations: Evidence-based medicine in psychiatric treatment of people with intellectual disabilities - pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages (M. Seidel); Use of new antipsychotics in people with mental retardation (N. Bouras); The use of antidepressant in people with ID: the publication of the Italian consensus conference (G. La Malfa); Effectiveness of assertive community treatment (ACT) in MR and psychiatric disorders: a randomised control trial (E. Tsakanitos).


Presentations: Filling the geographical vacuum: a standard system for description and mapping services for people with ID (L. Salvador-Carulla); Filling the gap between service research and healthcare planning for people with MR in England (G. Holt); Mental health services for people (adults) with intellectual disability in Asia (H. Kwok); Services and policies in mental health care for people with ID in Australia (J. Torr).

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF THE SECTION

The section is planning to prepare a webpage (Dr Marco Bertelli). To this pur pose a cooperation has been requested to Dr K Munir (US) and Dr Peter Carpenter (UK).

World Psychiatric Association. XIII World Congress of Psychiatry. Four symposium proposals filled.

V Congress AEMH-MR (Co-patronage)

The section is planning a debate on the name of Mental Retardation and pros and cons of changing it in agreement with current developments in the field.

Contacts have been set up with main organizations in the field of MR, including the National Association of the Dually Diagnosed (NADD-US) and the European Association on Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MH-MR). The WPA patronaged and participated at the NADD International Congress (Boston, 2004), and has agreed to co-patronage and participate at the MH-MR V International Congress (Stigges -Barcelona, October, 2005).

WPA - SECTION PSYCHIATRY OF MENTAL RETARDATION

News on section officers

Dr HW M Kwok replaced Dr. R. Novell as section secretary after the Florence meeting, as Dr. R. Novell has been elected president of the Spanish Association of Research on Mental retardation (AEECMR)

Dec 2004 Members Update

In 2004 the number of members has increased by 25%.

Number of Members: 38

Number of Countries represented: 14 [Australia, Belgium, Canada, China (Hong-Kong), Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Spain, The Netherlands, Uganda, USA, UK]