



Early Career Psychiatrists Section

World Psychiatric Association

Section Newsletter

First Edition 2022

Message from Section Chair

Dear colleagues and friends,

We are very excited with the upcoming hybrid World Congress of Psychiatry that is going to take place in person in Thailand, but also offering the option of attending remotely, for those who may not be able to travel to Bangkok in August 2022.

We are also very proud that we were able to kick off with the first edition of the World Psychiatry Exchange Program, and host early career psychiatrists in different continents around the world. This Newsletter contains several articles of the experiences of early career psychiatrists on their Exchanges, which we encourage you to read.

On behalf of the WPA ECP board, Mariana Pinto da Costa, Section Chair

Tunisia

WORLD PSYCHIATRY EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN IRAN: A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE.

By Cyrine Ben Said (Faculty of medicine of Tunis, Tunis El Manar University) and Hela Ben Abid (Faculty of Medicine of Monastir, University of Monastir)

Having just participated in the new World Psychiatry Exchange Program in Iran we are delighted to share our amazing experience with other ECP members.





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The exchange program was a two-week training under the supervision of Dr. Shalbafan in both Rasul-Akram and Iran psychiatry hospitals. Rasul-Akram is a general hospital, where we learned about interesting interactions between somatic and psychiatric diseases such as multiple sclerosis and psychosis, autoimmune diseases and depression. A day in a child psychiatry out-patient department was also scheduled in this hospital.

The Iran psychiatry hospital was a spacious, well organized psychiatric hospital, with five different educational groups: Adult general, Emergency, Addiction, Community-based and Psychotherapy. We have visited several wards with different professors and had the opportunity to attend psychiatric interviews always translated in English. We also participated in daily doctors meetings and critical research papers reading. As psychotherapy is integrated into psychiatric training programs in most educational centers in Iran, we visited the psychotherapy ward and that was one of the best experiences we had, mainly because there was no such department in Razi psychiatric hospital in Tunisia.

We visited the Brain and Cognition Clinic, a semi-state facility with state-of-the-art technology for patient care and research in neurology, cognitive sciences and psychiatry. With our supervisor, we experienced the peer-led model for research and we were strongly encouraged to collaborate on publications, research, and training.

We visited a first-line facility and we were impressed by the way the mh-Gap was implemented, how a systematic screening of mental disorders was performed to all patients and how data were computerized and collected.

One of the strongest points of the health system in Iran is the trainees' supervision. There are daily training sessions where one learns not only the techniques of a psychiatric interview, but also case reports, psychotherapeutic approach in care and medication. In addition, in Iran psychiatric hospital, there is a Hotline managed by trainees where patients can call at the beginning of a relapse, get information or listening and referral during a suicidal crisis.

This review is not complete without mentioning how generous, kind and helpful the Iranians have been with us, whether inside the hospital or outside: we were warmly invited each day to



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traditional meals, visits to historical sites, museums and gardens!

The visit of Tehran, but also Isfahan, Yazd and Shiraz, the customs, the culinary and cultural traditions, the art and the intelligence of Iranian people will mark us forever. We strongly hope to do the same to all our Iranian guests and friends in the Tunisian exchange program as well as in other scientific and cultural events.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank the Early Career Psychiatrists Section of the World Psychiatric Association for being a supportive network that allowed early career psychiatrists from different countries to connect, share and work together, as well as all professors and psychiatry trainees of Rasul-Akram and Iran Psychiatric hospitals.

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United Kingdom

SOCIOCULTURAL BELIEFS ABOUT MENSTRUATION: NEED FOR A CHANGE

By Vivian Kapil Venugopal*, Priya Khanna* and Mini Joseph*

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Anecdotal practices of rituals during menstruation across the globe spanning various cultures show that some of these beliefs transcended civilisations with remnants still lingering around some modern developing societies. Some examples are women advised not to enter kitchen as it can contaminate foods; not to enter 'puja/religious' rooms at home as menstruation is viewed as impure; not to wash hair; not to touch a man during her periods as it would make her pregnant. Even though there are multiple explanations or hypothesis for these beliefs which can border on the realms of possibilities or even rationalisation, it would always remain a cultural enigma about ancient times albeit pain killers, sanitary napkins etc. Women go through a lot of physical, emotional ordeal during the period of menstruation which could hardly be comprehended by society even in modern world backed by science we currently live in, so it is difficult for one to assume that all people in those times had a better understanding. Lack of widespread understanding about the science behind this coupled with patriarchal mind-sets in some, placed increased onus on women to say the least. Even though there are numerous female deities, red mark in forehead which could metaphorically represent the cultural



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supremacy and power of female gender, yet there are some who continue to be plagued by patriarchy consciously or unconsciously overlooking those abstract references. Creating an environment where women could rest through synthesis of some of these beliefs among societies might have been a Trojan into the strong barriers wielded by human minds back then. There are still young girls who grow in environments not privy to knowledge about menstrual health and hygiene and plagued by cultural taboos, restrictions which ensue in significant psychosocial impact. This impact is only exponentially increased by some misconceptions, rituals associated with menstruation. However, it would be necessary for menstrual awareness programs to focus not only on females but for the society as a whole to make an earnest endeavour to understand these concepts and be supportive. Menstrual awareness campaigns could have Health professionals who are messengers of science yet culturally sensitive to the origin, knowledge of these beliefs so that the people could make informed personal choices instead of blind following of these beliefs. It would be necessary to find a right balance between acknowledging the significance of some of those beliefs back in those days yet evolving from it with time, in order for these awareness programs to breach the stigma associated with menstruation in societies where modern feminist concepts are still in nascent stages. This would go a long way in making people more receptive to foster a gender friendly culture, infrastructure in order to strike the right chord and have a positive psychosociocultural impact. The effects of time and science are multifaceted, refines our perception about our own past, self, beliefs and world around us, hence it is time for all societies to reflect, evolve from these beliefs as changing times warrant receptive, changing mind-sets.

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Brazil

WPA EXCHANGE PROGRAM FROM BRAZIL TO KINGS COLLEGE, LONDON: A DREAM COME TRUE

By Vinicius Belinati Loureiro, Clinica Cadmo (Curitiba - Paraná - Brazil), Brazilian Psychiatric Association

The WPA Exchange Program is a clinical and academic exchange program in psychiatry that allows broadening the learning possibilities for psychiatry trainees and early career psychiatrists, by



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allowing the participants to take part in a clinical academic placement in other country overseas.

I have no doubt that the program was a dream come true and has contributed a lot to my academic and personal growth. Therefore, I highly recommend that all psychiatrists participate, as it is an excellent opportunity to broaden network with several experts, and also improve academic activity, research and clinical practice.



King's College London is a service of excellence, with a very solid and broad structure. It was very interesting to see the vast possibilities of services and resources to provide care and support patients. The dynamics of the clinical services at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust caught my attention, with multidisciplinary or one-to-one meetings (video calls) contacting from the beginning of an admission to

the ward, the community psychiatrist, social worker or family members.

I also really enjoyed seeing how research is taken seriously and valued. Also, observing patients speaking about their symptoms and condition in a different language, in a different culture, was very enriching. During my exchange, London even experienced a major weather alert, due to storm Eunice.

The hospital areas, Lewisham, Southwark, Lambeth and Croydon, as well as London, have a very diverse population, from different cultures, countries, speaking different languages. Similarly the staff was multicultural was well. This picture portrays a day when we had lunch together, Prof Mariana Pinto da Costa from Portugal, Dr Marianna Rogowska from Poland, Dr Thomas Husselbee from the UK, Dr Mohammad Badr from Egypt and me from Brazil.

It was very fulfilling to be under the supervision of Dr Mariana Pinto da Costa and follow her clinical and academic work.

Among the highlights: Attending the research presentation of PhD students from King's College London, in the same room as the world famous Professor Sir Robin Murray; Discussing with colleagues the study we developed in Brazil on Psychotherapy training in Brazil: Psychiatric trainees' views and experiences. This is a study that I am looking forward to present as speaker at the World Congress of



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Psychiatry in Thailand 2022. At the end of the placement I presented to the other colleagues at Virginia Woolf ward my perceptions on the WPA Exchange Program at the WCP 2022, in a talk entitled “From Brazil to Europe - Flying the Ocean to fulfill the Dream of an Exchange at King's College London”.



I would like to especially thank an outstanding person, teacher, researcher and clinician, Dr Mariana Pinto da Costa, for her patience, trust, affection and eagerness to assist, and for all the time she devoted to me during my stay in London. I extend my gratitude to the entire Section of Early Career Psychiatrists, the World Psychiatric Association, and to all the colleagues who have welcomed me into their day-to-day service at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and King's College London.

Finally, I invite everyone to watch my two presentations at

WCP 2022.

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Please feel free to email me, I'll be happy to help.

Macedonia

EXCHANGE TIME: FROM SKOPJE, N. MACEDONIA TO ZAGREB, CROATIA

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Amazing. If I had to choose one word to describe my exchange experience in Croatia, that would be it. Although it was ‘only’ for a period of two weeks, I had the chance to experience a lot. Psychiatry wise and non psychiatry wise.

I want to say why I decided to apply for this particular programme. Firstly it was because of the language, which I speak and understand quite well. To have the interaction with the patients and the



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staff as well, was something that I enjoyed a lot. I could comprehend the local context, the positive and negative aspects of the system, the problems patients reported, the jokes between the patients and so on.

My local coordinator for the exchange at the Psychiatric Clinic “Sv Ivan” in Zagreb was Dr Irena Rojnic Palavra, a person that I have only high praises for. She organised each day for me at the Clinic, contacting different departments and making sure everything was going smoothly. She even got me to participate in the first Croatian Forum of Young Psychiatrists, which was held in the vicinity of Zagreb. That by itself was a unique experience since I got to meet a lot of the young peers, listen to their high quality presentations, exchange ideas and discuss medical and non medical matters. I was the only non Croatian young psychiatrist participating at the event, making it a Forum with an international participation. 😊 Once again, big thanks to Dr Irena for being an awesome person.

Another first for me and for the Clinic was the First conference that was organised by the Daily hospital for eating disorders “H(RANA)” titled “Mental consequences of obesity”. Their work is really impressive, they have a great team and I am happy that I got to be part of that conference as well, since I learned a lot of new content that changed my attitude towards food. The workshops for “Mindful eating” and “Therapy through movement and dance” will remain in my mind for a long time.

Being part of the team from the Daily Hospital at my home institution, I was interested to see which programmes are offered at many of the daily hospitals in “Sv Ivan”. I was part of the different therapy groups at the daily hospitals for: smoking cessation, video games addiction and internet addiction; Gambling addiction; Alcohol addiction; Psychotic disorders; Non-psychotic disorders; Dementia. This more specified and subspecialized way of work only enriched my views towards the importance of daily hospital treatments and gave me an idea how my team and myself can incorporate some of the principles and make them a reality in the local setting that we have in Skopje.

Another important professional interest during my stay is that at “Sv Ivan” I saw the practical implications of deep TMS, having only the experience of working with rTMS at the University Clinic of Psychiatry in Skopje in N. Macedonia.

Being limited to 500 words for my experience, I am sharing my email if you have any questions regarding the exchange. All in all, it was a worthy experience, I would recommend it to my peers. Last but not least, a big thank you to WPA for organizing the Exchange program.



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WPA

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