

***Message from Section Chair***

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We are thrilled to share this newsletter following the wonderful World Congress of Psychiatry in Mexico, held from 14 to 17 November 2024. Within these pages, you find the inspiring experiences of Fellowship winners and contributors from the original sessions.

We are also proud to announce that applications are now open for the fourth edition of the World Psychiatry Exchange Program, offering early career psychiatrists opportunities to gain invaluable experiences across different continents. This edition includes reflections from participants who have completed their exchanges, and we warmly invite you to explore their stories.

Additionally, after receiving applications from all regions, we are preparing for elections of the next Section's leadership. Members will soon receive an email with further details about this.

We wish you a healthy, peaceful, and successful 2025. We look forward to seeing you again at the 25th World Congress of Psychiatry in Prague, from 5 to 8 October 2025.

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



Picture 1: Early Career Psychiatrists Section dinner at the World Congress of Psychiatry in Mexico

## WPA MEXICO

### WPA World Congress of Psychiatry: A Memorable Journey

Andrés Román-Jarrín, MD MS

Institution: University of Seville, Spain.

Professional association: Ecuadorian Association of Psychiatry.

Corresponding author's contact details: [dr.andresromanjarrin@gmail.com](mailto:dr.andresromanjarrin@gmail.com)

The WPA World Congress of Psychiatry in Mexico was an unforgettable experience that I will forever cherish. My journey began with a clear objective: to attend my first WPA World Congress, which was happening relatively close to my home country. As an international medical graduate, I've learned to seize every opportunity, and this congress was no exception. In my search for opportunities offered by WPA to early-career psychiatrists, I found the WPA Fellowship Award for Early Career Psychiatrists. Initially, I hesitated, thinking, "Andrés, be realistic." Luckily, I've had mentors along my career such as Professor Cesar Soutullo who planted the seed



Picture 1: Dr. Andrés Román-Jarrín in the middle, with the outgoing president of the WPA to the right, Dr. Danuta Wasserman, and the incoming president Dr. Thomas Schulze to the left, at the WPA Early Career Psychiatrist Fellowship Award ceremony.

to dream beyond my limits, therefore I submitted my application. When the acceptance email arrived, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. This recognition wasn't just for me, but for everyone who has supported my journey.

I want to begin by acknowledging my family, who have always been my greatest supporters. I also recognize the guidance I've received from mentors such as Professor Felipe Ortuño from Clínica Universidad de Navarra and Professor Sansea Jacobson from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. I am also grateful to colleagues like Dr. Victor Pereira-Sanchez and Dr. Blake Gibson, whose constant encouragement inspires me to keep striving. Additionally, I am thankful to Professors Pilar Saiz, Boris Birmaher, and my current mentors, Professors Miguel Ruiz, and Nathalia Garrido-Torres from the University of Seville, who have welcomed me to their research team to pursue my PhD in Biomedicine.

Another highlight of the congress was

winning the WPA 3-Minute Presentation competition. If being awarded the WPA Fellowship was a surprise, winning first place in this competition truly struck me. Presenting my research alongside talented young researchers was challenging, but technical glitches during my presentation made it difficult to deliver my message without losing focus. As I sat down after presenting, I was just relieved it was over. When third place was announced, I resigned myself to trying again next year. But to my astonishment, I was named first place winner! All the other presenters did an outstanding job, and I would have happily given them first place as well. It was truly an honor to win. I encourage early career researchers to participate in next year's WPA 3-Minute Presentation competition, you might surprise yourself with what you can achieve.

Beyond the awards, meeting other WPA Fellows and learning about the impactful work they're doing across different countries was both inspiring and humbling. It was reaffirming to realize that we are part of a global community of young doctors committed to achieving excellence and making a positive impact on our patients and communities.

The WPA World Congress of Psychiatry has given me a deep sense of belonging to a global community dedicated to advancing psychiatry. It is a unique platform where we share cutting-edge research, exchange ideas, and build connections across borders. I look forward to continuing to engage with this incredible network, united by our shared commitment to improving mental health care worldwide in the years ahead.

## **WORLD PSYCHIATRY EXCHANGE**

### **Experiencing British Psychiatry through the World Psychiatry Exchange Program at King's College London and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust**

Artin A. Mahdanian, MD, FRCPC \* <sup>1,2</sup>, Mariana Pinto da Costa, MD, PhD <sup>3,4</sup>

1-Dr Artin Psychiatry, Washington DC, USA, 2-Wellness Hub, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada,

3- Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London, London, UK, 4- South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust



Picture 1: Networking with colleagues Joy Muhia from Mental Health Innovation Network (MHIN), Mariana Pinto da Costa, Artin Mahdanian (from left to right)

\* Corresponding author: email: [drartin@outlook.com](mailto:drartin@outlook.com), website: [www.drartin.com](http://www.drartin.com)

In today's interconnected world, international experiences have become an invaluable necessity for professionals across all disciplines. A global perspective is critical in psychiatry as culture, religion, language, climate and societal beliefs play pivotal roles in understanding the patients and delivering effective individualised care. Exposure to different systems and practices enriches a psychiatrist's perspective and enhances their ability to provide comprehensive care. In addition, immersing oneself in diverse international healthcare settings helps foster a deeper appreciation of

these core etiological issues in psychiatric conditions and shapes a solid foundation for a Global Mental Health perspective. The World Psychiatry Exchange Program<sup>1</sup> offers unique opportunities for psychiatrists to engage in such a transformative experience. Through this program, AAM had the privilege of spending one fruitful month at King's College London and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) shadowing MPC.

SLaM is one of the most renowned mental health institutions in the UK, with a rich history dating back to the early 20th century. It consists of Maudsley Hospital, Bethlem Royal Hospital (the oldest Psychiatric Hospital in the world hosting the Museum of Mind), Lambeth Hospital, and Lewisham Hospital. This vast healthcare network provides comprehensive mental health services across a wide spectrum, including general psychiatry, child and adolescent mental health, forensic services, and specialized treatments for complex conditions. SLaM is closely integrated with King's College London, one of the top academic institutions globally. This creates a unique partnership that bridges clinical practice, education, academia and research. The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN), at the heart of this partnership, forms a powerhouse for advancing mental health research, education, and innovation, attracting professionals and trainees from across the world.

The UK has long been at the forefront of psychiatric care, with a rich history of pioneering mental health treatment and research from the early asylums to modern, evidence-based practices. Through this experience and AAM's clinical work in the USA and Canada, it was inevitable to observe the similarity of psychiatric practices in these three jurisdictions. The emphasis on multidisciplinary care, patient-centred and holistic approaches, and the integration of research and evidence-based guidelines into clinical practice are just a few examples. Other striking parallels are the focus on early intervention, community-based care, and addressing stigma associated with mental health conditions. However, there are notable differences in healthcare structures; while the UK's NHS provides universal access to care, Canada operates a publicly funded healthcare system with provincial oversight, and the US relies heavily on insurance-based models. There are also some procedural differences in the medicolegal aspects of psychiatric practice, resource allocation, access to specialized services, and cultural attitudes toward mental health. The NHS's integrated services and specialized pathways offer structured care for patients, whereas in Canada and the USA, access to mental health resources can vary significantly based on geography or insurance coverage.



Picture 2: Freud's Museum in London

This exchange experience at King's College London and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust highlighted not only the importance of cultural and systemic differences but also the shared global mission to improve mental health outcomes. It reinforced the belief that learning across borders is essential for fostering innovation and inclusivity in psychiatric care.

<https://worldpsychiatryexchangeprogram.wordpress.com/>

## INDIA

### **Tenacious Tuesday Teachings: Empowering Indian Psychiatry Postgraduates Through Online Learning.**

Authors:

Dr Prajakta Patkar, Assistant Professor in Psychiatry, Topiwala National Medical College & BYL Nair Charitable Hospital, Mumbai

Dr Sreelakshmi Vaidyanathan, Associate Professor in Psychiatry, AIIMS Nagpur

Dr Neena Sawant, Professor in Psychiatry, G.S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai

Corresponding Author: Dr. Prajakta Patkar [prajakta06@gmail.com](mailto:prajakta06@gmail.com) +91-9850544882

At a time when many students were battling against the loss of academics due to the COVID pandemic, the Indian Psychiatric Society - West Zone (IPS-WZ) understood their woes and undertook a massive responsibility in the year 2021 for the postgraduate students in psychiatry studying in the western part of India. Under the able guidance of the IPS-WZ President Dr Arun Marwale, Dr. (Prof.) Neena Sawant started this monthly online learning program for postgraduates in psychiatry in the said zone. This included students from three states: Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa along with the associated union territories. The activity was conducted on a Tuesday of every month by the Postgraduate Education Sub-committee and was rightfully named "Tenacious Tuesday Teachings".

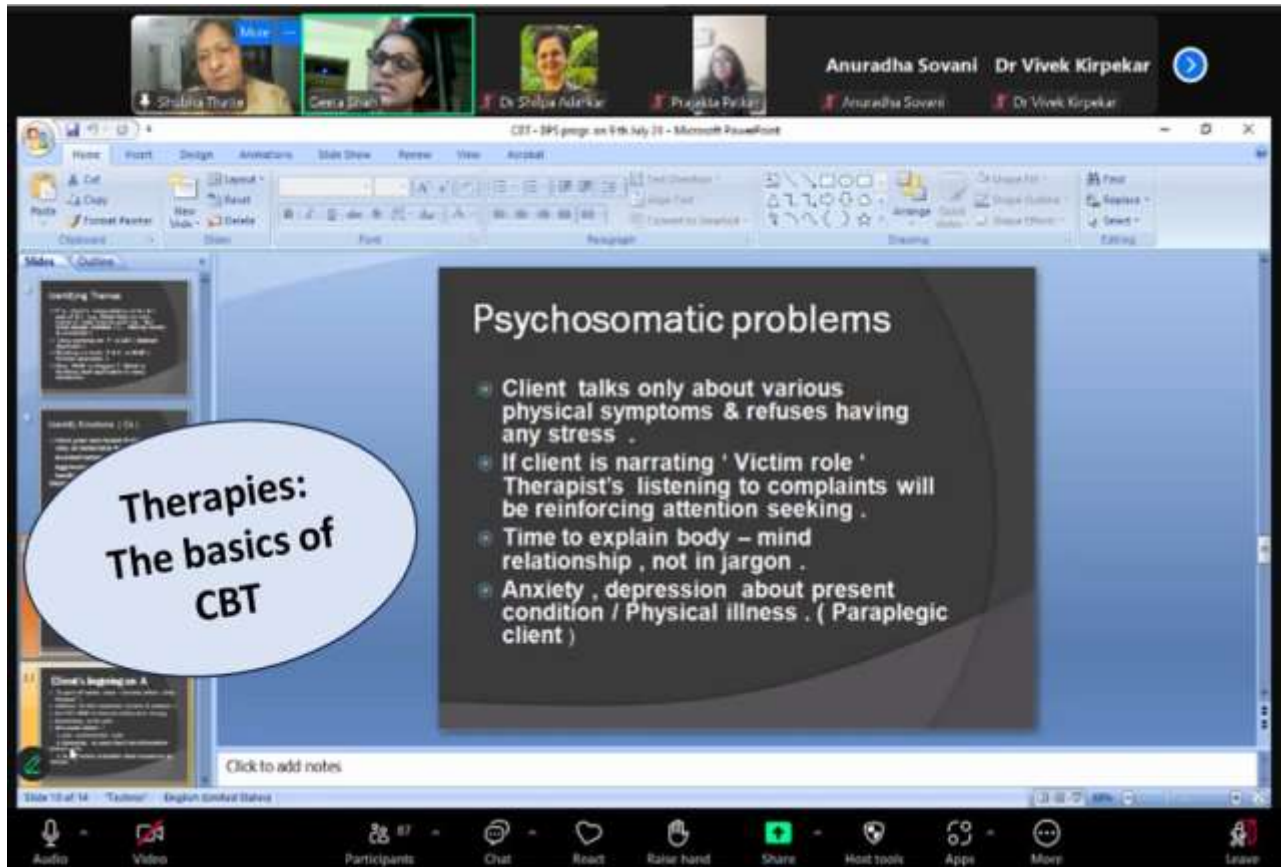
The chairpersons from this committee, having been teachers in major medical colleges, precisely understood the needs of the modern psychiatry postgraduate student. Hence this initiative focussed on Improving the skill set of the postgraduates in the following areas: Communication skills, History-taking skills, Psychiatry and Neurology examination skills, Examination writing skills and finally viva skills. The program also extended to include sessions to learn and improve the different writing skills needed by a PG student, such as hospital documentation, certifications, and research writing. Sessions were moderated by the members of the sub-committee and were conducted by established faculty in psychiatry. "Tenacious Tuesdays" soon became a massive hit amongst the students where each session saw a minimum of 80 - 90 students join each time and could go up to 150.

Dr. Sawant made sure that the committee members were also early career psychiatrists who understood the needs of the postgraduates better and who the students would find very approachable. This also ensured better outreach and participation from the students. A WhatsApp group to announce the sessions and circulate reading material was made for ease of communication with the students. The whole initiative was a pro-Bono activity by the IPS-WZ faculty and committee.

Learning didn't stop there!! The committee arranged for mock practical examinations for students who volunteered. These were exactly like the ones the students faced in the final degree practical exams where examiners were arranged for and students appeared for the mocks online. This gave the students a feel of the actual exams and extensive practical knowledge tips from the learned faculty members.

The committee learnt too... regular feedback forms were circulated at the end of each session and comments and suggestions were taken every time making sure student's needs were addressed. The committee also has done a detailed analysis of the postgraduate student feedback and is in the process of publishing it soon.

Since the PG sub-committee continued this monthly activity, the forthcoming Presidents wholeheartedly supported the initiative & it is now in its fourth consecutive year. When the vision, knowledge and philanthropic attitude of senior Psychiatrists are combined with the dedication of mid-career psychiatrists, it can ensure we aid the modern early career psychiatrist's learning, ultimately shaping the future of Psychiatry!!!



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. At the top, there are video thumbnails for participants: Shubha Thirumala, Geeta Shah, Dr. Shilpa Alekar, Pragati Parkekar, Anuradha Sovani, and Dr. Vivek Kirpekar. The main content is a PowerPoint slide titled "Psychosomatic problems" with the following bullet points:

- Client talks only about various physical symptoms & refuses having any stress .
- If client is narrating ' Victim role ' Therapist's listening to complaints will be reinforcing attention seeking .
- Time to explain body – mind relationship , not in jargon .
- Anxiety , depression about present condition / Physical illness . ( Paraplegic client )

A callout bubble on the left side of the slide reads: "Therapies: The basics of CBT". The Zoom meeting controls are visible at the bottom, including Audio, Video, Participants, Chat, React, Raise hand, Share, Host tools, Apps, More, and Leave.

## Reflections on the Psychotherapy Workshop in India: Sri Lankan trainees' perspectives

Anuradha Baminiwatta. Department of Psychiatry, University of Kelaniya / University Psychiatry Unit, Colombo North Teaching Hospital, Sri Lanka

Helani Alahakoon, National Institute of Mental Health, Sri Lanka

Corresponding author - Anuradha Baminiwatta, baminiwatta@kln.ac.lk

“The Psychiatric Associations of South Asia (WPA Zone 15) organized a remarkable workshop on psychotherapy for postgraduate trainees and early career psychiatrists in the region in September 2024. This was held in Juhu, Mumbai with the keen participation of over 200 delegates. The organizers thoughtfully offered free accommodation and registration for five early career psychiatrists and three trainees from Sri Lanka to attend this event.

As a postgraduate trainee, I found this experience informative as well as transformative. It helped me reconnect with the psychoanalytic perspectives. When I entered psychiatry training four years back, I had a deep admiration for psychoanalysis. However, owing to the lack of attention given to psychoanalytic concepts in the current clinical practice and training in Sri Lanka, my connection with these concepts had faded. Thus, listening to Prof. Salman Akhtar cleverly untangling the complexities of psychoanalytic thought using aptly chosen clinical and personal anecdotes was a refresher. In particular, his nuanced approach to understanding anxiety, and the unorthodox elaboration of personality organizations, had a lasting impact on my thinking. Although some concepts initially felt alien, when I reflected on them, I realized that I may have felt that way because I have been trained to look at things from an evidence-based medical lens. Hence, this experience certainly helped broaden my thinking.

Moreover, meeting young psychiatrists from across India enriched this experience, fostering valuable connections and new perspectives. Beyond the workshop, despite the brevity of my stay, I had the delight of immersing myself in the Indian culture and cuisine.”



Picture 1: Team of early career psychiatrists and trainees from Sri Lanka at the Psychotherapy Workshop in India

“As young psychiatrists from Sri Lanka, we have relatively limited exposure to psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Therefore, attending the workshop organized by the WPA on this subject was an invaluable opportunity. We deeply appreciate Prof. Salman Akhtar, a renowned expert in psychoanalysis, for traveling to India to share his remarkable insights and expertise with us. His unique teaching approach, which

involved drawing on examples from his clinical experiences, made complex psychoanalytic concepts more accessible and easier to understand.

Prof. Akhtar's ability to connect with the audience and provoke thought in a profound and engaging manner was truly inspiring. Among the topics discussed, the "five levels of mental organization" was particularly fascinating and significantly altered the way I perceive and analyze my patients. Additionally, his discussion on the impact of childhood trauma on mental health and its long-term consequences was both enlightening and effectively delivered.

Overall, the session was immensely beneficial, enhancing my knowledge and skills in psychoanalysis in a way that will undoubtedly improve my lifelong patient care. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Akhtar for his exceptional teaching and to the organizing team for facilitating this outstanding learning experience, as well as the opportunity to enjoy the rich culture of India.”



**WORLD  
PSYCHIATRIC  
ASSOCIATION**

**25TH WORLD CONGRESS  
OF PSYCHIATRY**  
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC | 5-8 OCTOBER, 2025

**Abstract submission deadline: 2 April 2025**



***Want to submit an article***

***Email the editor: [wpa.ecp.section@gmail.com](mailto:wpa.ecp.section@gmail.com)***