

Neuropsychiatry

Proposal for a Special Interest Group

Background:

While it is generally accepted that neuroscientific evidence should imbue all psychiatric practice, there is a large group of patients who are best characterized as being 'neuropsychiatric'. The discipline of Neuropsychiatry was previously regarded as a borderland discipline, being an amalgam of Psychiatry and Neurology. This view has been challenged more recently. Major advances in neuroscience and medical technologies in the last three decades have resulted in a 'softer' view of the brain amongst neurologists and more empiricism amongst psychiatrists. Neuropsychiatry is therefore acquiring a secure base of disorders and interventions, and has emerged as a subdiscipline in its own right. It requires a more specific training pathway and the development of specific skills. Some examples of these developments include the major advances in neurodegenerative disorders, the recognition of movement disorders as being complex behavioural-cognitive-emotional disorders, the increasing interest in functional neurologic disorders, the recognition of a variety of autoimmune disorders, rapid improvements in neuroimaging, etc. At the same time, the discovery of biomarkers, several brain stimulation techniques and newer drugs are modifying the treatment landscape. The International Neuropsychiatric Association has been active for nearly three decades and is now attracting greater interest. Many countries have national neuropsychiatric associations. It is time that the WPA recognised this burgeoning interest and established a special interest group in Neuropsychiatry, with the likelihood that it will emerge as a vibrant section of the WPA community.

Neuropsychiatric disorders:

While it is impossible to completely delineate the 'territory' of Neuropsychiatry, some disorders that comprise it include: neurocognitive disorders including the dementias (Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, front-temporal dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, other) and predementia syndromes (e.g. mild cognitive impairment); delirium and related syndromes; disorders of arousal (coma, persistent vegetative state, catatonia), seizure disorders especially in relation to their psychiatric and behavioural aspects and nonepileptic seizures; movement disorders, especially drug-induced movement disorders (tardive dyskinesia, akathisia, parkinsonian side effects, neuroleptic malignant syndrome), psychiatric aspects of movement disorders such as Parkinson's disease, Huntington disease, and dystonia; psychogenic movement disorders; psychiatric aspects of traumatic brain injury; secondary psychiatric disorders, i.e. psychosis, depression, mania, and anxiety disorders secondary to 'organic' brain disease; substance-related psychiatric disorders; attentional disorders (adult ADHD and related syndromes); autoimmune disorders affecting the brain; tic disorders, including Tourette's; neurodevelopmental disorders and psychiatric aspects of sleep disorders. This is of course a dynamic field that will change as our knowledge advances.

Objectives:

1. To develop a forum for the interchange of the latest developments in the diagnosis and management of neuropsychiatric disorders.
2. To raise the standard of teaching of neuroscientific principles that underlie psychiatric practice but developing and disseminating educational material and organizing seminars, symposia and webinars.
3. To develop and disseminate an international curriculum for training in neuropsychiatry.

4. To organise symposia and workshops at WPS congresses and other national and international psychiatry and neurology meetings.
5. To develop position statements for emerging diagnostic techniques and complex neuropsychiatric disorders.
6. To increase the collaboration of Psychiatry with Neurology, Neuropsychology and other medical disciplines to foster a holistic view of mental illness.

Plan:

To have the first meeting of the Neuropsychiatry SIG at the WPC2023 in Vienna to develop an agenda and a strategy within the aegis of the WPA.

Proposer:

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Supporters:

- International Neuropsychiatric Association (President: Prof David, Anthony anthony.s.david@ucl.ac.uk ; Treasurer: Prof Valsa Eapen v.eapen@unsw.edu.au)
- Global Neuropsychiatry Group (convenor: Dr Jasvinder Singh jasvinder.singh@uq.edu.au)