

**Undergraduate teaching & training in psychiatry, core curriculum & assessment:
Recommendations of the
WPA co sponsored meeting, Coventry
18th & 19th March, 2013**

The WPA Section on Education in Psychiatry and the Midlands Psychiatric Research Group (the Division of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK) co-organised and co-sponsored an international seminar on undergraduate education in psychiatry with the theme "Setting curriculum guidelines for low income & developing countries" in Coventry, Warwickshire, UK 18-19 March 2013.

The main recommendations from the meeting were:

1. Core curriculum and assessment guidelines and procedures need ongoing reviews especially in low income & developing countries.
2. When developing local policy for core curriculum and assessment guidelines, due consideration should be given to the different learning domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Curriculum guidelines should include assessment procedures.
3. Course evaluation should be incorporated & made an integral component of formal teaching and of clinical placements.

The participants of the meeting proposed the following guiding principles for a core curriculum for undergraduate psychiatry to medical students. It is anticipated that adoption of these recommendations in different countries should ensure adherence to educational principles and promote high standards of mental health practice taking into account local contexts.

(We use assessments to mean examination of what the students have learned and evaluation to examine if the teaching has delivered what it was supposed to do).

CURRICULUM

Knowledge

By the end of medical school (or a locally specified time period) medical students should be able to:

1. Recognise common forms of psychopathology as well as the epidemiology, clinical manifestations, natural course and response to treatment of common psychiatric disorders.
2. Familiarise themselves with common forms of pharmacological, psychotherapeutic and psychosocial interventions and the evidence for these interventions
3. Recognise local mental health problems including those related to natural disasters, war, migration and indigenous populations.
4. Identify mental health promotion opportunities and interventions in the pathways to psychiatric care

5. Highlight the impact of mental illness on the health economy and society and recognise the need for the inclusion of mental health promotion and treatment in public health policies
6. Describe ethical, legal and cultural influences / values on patient management

Skills

1. Establish rapport with patients included those who have mental health problems and/or are acutely distressed and with their families as needed
2. Take a full psychiatric history and assess the mental state (including a cognitive assessment).
3. Demonstrate clinical reasoning and present a diagnostic formulation (which includes being able to describe symptoms and mental state features, aetiological factors, differential diagnoses, a plan of management and assessment of prognosis and clinical ethical reasoning), which takes into account the bio psychosocial factors based on patients' wishes and best-available evidence relevant to the local context.
4. Identify and apply those interventions for mental health promotion and common psychiatric conditions that can be provided by non mental health specialists
5. Recognise what constitutes a psychiatric emergency and when a referral is warranted and to whom

Attitudes

1. Evaluate societal attitudes towards mental illness and the values attached to mental health and illness
2. Reflect on their own attitude to mental illness and their personal values and the impact these might have on the clinical care he/she provides to patients
3. Demonstrate compassion, empathy, dignity and respect for patients and take into account the principles of autonomy, confidentiality, capacity and consent as they relate to the local context
4. Recognise the importance of developing professional relationships based on ethical standards, transparency & probity.

ASSESSMENT

Psychiatry should be an important component of the examination process. Assessment could include the following components

1. Attendance, participation and successful completion of requirements of clinical placement as described in the local curriculum

2. Clinical log books and/or cards that demonstrate evidence of clinical and reflective practice
3. An observed assessment of their interviewing skills and ability to detect common psychiatric conditions (through a structured clinical exam or in a clinic)
4. Written exams to test clinical and theoretical psychiatric knowledge using MCQs, essays, patient management problems or other written assessments techniques as per local needs and resources
5. Viva or case based discussion