

## UPDATES IN MENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT: IN KEEPING WITH MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S THREE BEYOND

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In keeping with Ministry of Health's (MOH) Three Beyond, community-based programmes aim to ensure that mental health problems are identified and treatment offered in a timely and appropriate setting. Some of these Community-based services include Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT), Community Mental Health Team (CMHT), Aged Psychiatry Community Assessment and Treatment Service (APCATS), Response Early Intervention and Assessment in Community mental Health (REACH) and Mental Health GP-Partnership Programme. MOH, and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) are also partnering many of the Regional Health Systems and community care organisations to develop the National Mental Health blueprint. Mental health disorders are increasing in prevalence, and family physicians (FP) are often the first to detect such symptoms in their patients. Similarly, the FP manages multimorbidity, and needs to consider the impact of mental health disorders on physical health and vice versa. As part of the enhanced Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (GDFM) course, this update in mental health management is most timely.

- **The Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT)**

CHAT is a group of healthcare professionals dedicated to promoting awareness of mental illness, access to mental health resources and a free and confidential mental health check for those between 16 and 30 years old. CHAT works closely with students, educators and counsellors from Institutes of Higher Learning (e.g., polytechnics, universities and vocational institutions), social agencies and voluntary welfare groups, and mental health advocates to promote awareness (through talks, workshops and projects) and support young people with mental health concerns. CHAT Hub, located at SCAPE, is a one-stop resource hub to help youths in distress, as well as to destigmatize mental illness.

- **The Adult Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)**

The CMHT is funded by the Ministry of Health, under the National Mental Health Blueprint. The CMHT is a multidisciplinary team at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH). The team consist of psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, medical officers, medical social workers, community psychiatric nurses and counsellors. The team adopted a multi-disciplinary approach and aims to achieve the following for adult patients 18 to 65 years old with mental illness:

1. Reduce hospital re-admission through home-based psychosocial rehabilitation
2. Collaborate with social, health and government agencies to provide support for patients in the community
3. Provide training, consultation and support to social agencies and primary care providers to strengthen their capability in managing patients with mental conditions

- **Aged Psychiatry Community Assessment and Treatment Service (APCATS)**

APCATS is a community-oriented psychogeriatric outreach service for elderly aged 65 years and above with mental,

depressive disorders and/or psychotic disorders, have significant disability and are non-community ambulant. It has two programmes: APCATS Clinical Service (CS) and Regional Eldercare Agencies Partnership (REAP). APCATS CS provides assessments and treatment for homebound frail elderly with mental disorders via a multidisciplinary team comprising medical officers, psychologists, geriatric-psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and medical social workers under the supervision of a consultant geriatric psychiatrist. REAP is an extension of APCATS.

- **Response Early Intervention and Assessment in Community mental Health (REACH)**

REACH is a mental healthcare service, set up to work closely with schools, voluntary welfare organizations (VWOs), and general practitioners (GPs), to help students with emotional, social and/ or behavioural issues within the community. School counsellors and VWOs are to contact students'/children's parents to obtain their consent before the REACH assessment, which are typically conducted in the schools/family service centres. In addition, schools or VWOs can refer students/children suspected with ADHD, without major emotional and learning difficulties, to the listed GPs for assessment.

- **Mental Health GP-Partnership Programme**

The programme trains GPs to manage patients with stable mental illness and is in line with MOH's emphasis on managing patients with stable or long-term illnesses in the community. It offers value-added, affordable, and highly accessible services for patients with mental illnesses, while ensuring the best possible clinical care in the community.

More information on community-based services is available from IMH website: <https://www.imh.com.sg/clinical/>

In Unit 1, Dr Kwek Thiam Soo will discuss on the assessment and management of patients with anxiety disorders in family medicine practice. The various types of anxiety disorders with their key features will be discussed, and non-pharmacological and pharmacological management.

In Unit 2, Dr Tina Tan will bring readers through an update on the recently published DSM-V criteria for diagnosis and the treatment of an adult patient with depression. Screening tools for depression and tools to assess suicide risk are also covered in this article.

In Unit 3, Dr Ong Kian Chung will describe a practical paradigm on smoking cessation for doctors. An update on alternatives to cigarettes will be covered to allow readers breadth of knowledge on this topic, including the harms associated with cigarettes alternatives.

In Unit 4, Dr Lum Wai Mun Alvin & Mr Kelvin Tung will bring readers through the continuity of care of patients with schizophrenia in the community. The treatment gap for patients with schizophrenia, and the benefits of early detection and

continuity of care in the community will be emphasised.

In Unit 5, Dr Rajeev Ramachandran and Associate Professor John Wong CM will discuss about eating disorders and bring readers through the initial assessment, diagnostic evaluation and indications for hospitalisation for acute medical stabilisation.

In Unit 6, Dr Dennis Seow Chuen Chai and Dr Philip Yap Lin Kiat will cover the importance of caregiver interventions for caregivers of patients with dementia. Caregiver interventions have been shown to reduce caregiver depression, burden of care, improve their health and quality of life, and creating a positive experience in the GP consultation. The role of the GP to support caregivers is even more important during this COVID-19 pandemic where caregiver stress had increased.

An original paper by Dr Wong Sin Yew and Dr Lam Mun San talks about the burden of influenza and its implications during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though there is a reduction of seasonal influenza cases in the first three quarters of 2020, it is critical to maintain vigilance as seasonal and pandemic influenza remains a global health threat.

The selected 10 readings by A/Prof Goh Lee Gan include articles on changes in comorbidity of mental and physical health disorders in Singapore, psychological sequelae during the COVID-19 pandemic and emerging infectious disease outbreaks, psychological outcomes from chronic diseases and cancers, and finally the impact of caregiving on caregivers.

We hope you will enjoy this issue of mental health updates, which is part of the enhanced Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine course.

## REFERENCES

1. Xu BY, Low LL. Updates In Mental Health Management: In Keeping with Ministry of Health's Three Beyond. The Singapore Family Physician 2019 Apr;45(5):3