



Abdul-Monaf Al-Jadiry

Abdul-Monaf Al-Jadiry is Professor and Chair of Psychiatry at the University of Jordan, Amman. Formerly, he was Professor and Chair of Psychiatry at Baghdad University. An Iraqi, he trained in Iraq and in the UK but has been exiled as a result of the military conflict. His special interests include teaching, epidemiological research and community mental health services.

What has been the greatest impact of your profession on you personally?

There has been a significant positive impact on my personal life in terms of my attitude towards people, especially those who are in need of support and help.

Do you feel stigmatised by your profession?

Despite the fact that I live and practise in a culture that considers mental illness a stigma and views the psychiatrist as doctor of the mad, I have never been affected by this. The main difficulty I face is persuading health authorities to give priority and attention to the profession and the needs of people with mental disorders.

What are your interests outside of work?

Family, although I have been denied this interest as a result of the second gulf war: I had to leave home after an abduction attempt, and live abroad away from the family.

Who was your most influential trainer, and why?

In Iraq, Professor T. Hamdi whose charisma, encouragement and support were the foundation of my interest in mental health. In the UK, R. Cawley, P. Noble, D. Leiberman and A. Smith.

How has the political environment influenced your work?

I regret to say that almost all current instability, conflicts, wars and human suffering in the world are the outcome of dishonest politics and I don't see any honest



politics these days. I consider my people and myself victims of corrupt politics.

What is the most promising opportunity facing the profession?

It is rather sad that the current conflict of over 4 years has brought to the forefront the mental health needs of the population. There are such large numbers experiencing a wide variety of emotional problems that mental health has come to be recognised as an important public health need in Iraq. Consequently, there is increasing awareness of the importance of mental health in the community.

What is the greatest threat?

As an Iraqi I consider that lack of stability, the uncertainties about the future and the continuing violence in the country are major concerns. There is a major exodus of professionals from the country. The post-graduate training programmes have come to a halt. This atmosphere of insecurity has a negative impact on the people and their mental health and hinders the development of adequate mental health services.

What is the role of the psychiatrist in countries emerging from conflict?

I think there is a big role for psychiatrists because conflicts have a negative impact on

people's mental health. Besides providing mental healthcare to affected individuals and communities, the psychiatrist can be involved in preventive programmes to promote and support mental health in the community and provide psychosocial support to traumatised people, and can advocate public campaigns to increase mental health awareness and training programmes for psychosocial support. Ironically, the conditions that are contributing to the mental ill health of the population also provide opportunities to build community-based mental health services in Iraq.

What is the role of the psychiatrist in rebuilding healthcare systems?

Viewing the individual as a 'whole' not as distinct 'body' and 'mind' demonstrates the mutual effect of each on the other and highlights the importance of the psychiatrist's role in incorporating current mental healthcare concepts into the general healthcare system.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a dedicated soldier who fought for the care of his patients and as a teacher who educated his students! I dearly hope that peace and security prevail in Iraq soon, so that I and other exiled Iraqis can go back home, live a stable life and contribute to advancing mental health services. I am glad that during the past 4 years, in association with the World Health Organization, it has been possible to initiate a number of programmes to increase numbers of mental health professionals, develop public mental health education materials, carry out epidemiological studies in the general population and move towards the development of community-based mental health services. This is a good beginning, but a lot more needs to be done and there is an urgent need for support for mental health services in Iraq.

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