

304 - Mental healthcare services and advocacy for older people amidst the COVID crisis: Voices from South Asia

(Jointly organized by World Psychiatric Association – Indian Psychiatric Society – SAARC Psychiatric Federation – Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations)

Abstract:

Asia has some of the fastest developing economies and largest conglomerations of populations in the world. One such geographically unique region is South Asia, which accounts for nearly 25% of the global population and one-fifth of the psychiatric morbidity worldwide. This region is also ageing rapidly compared to rest of the world due to modifications in healthcare facilities, hygiene, and lifestyle as well as improved sanitation and infection control. Besides, some of the South Asian countries have also been worst-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic which has led to an exaggerated psychosocial crisis among their older people. Many of these nations face issues with community psychiatric care, trained manpower, socio-economic resources, legislation catering to psychological care and health inequalities. However, recent years have also witnessed paradigm shift in mental health policies, infrastructure and technology among these nations. Climate changes, migration, displacement and ecological characteristics further make South Asia unique in mental health needs and challenges.

With this background, leaders in the field of psychogeriatric care from some of the South Asian nations come together to discuss and highlight upcoming strategies for mental health advocacy and service delivery among older people in these regions. Mutual collaboration and cross-country research are globally called upon.

Panelists:

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Moderator:

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OnDemand Free/Oral Communications

400 - Environmental stimuli in nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic: Lessons learned to improve the management of challenging behavior

Inge Knippenberg – Ruslan Leontjevas – Johanna Nijsten – Christian Bakker – Raymond Koopmans - Debby Gerritsen

Challenging behavior is common in nursing home residents, especially in those with dementia. Our previous study suggested that a decrease in environmental stimuli (i.e., events that take place around residents but are not specifically directed at them) in nursing homes due to restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, may affect residents differently. To improve future care, the experience of

practitioners can be used to learn about the effects of environmental stimuli on challenging behavior in specific resident groups during the pandemic.

From the perspective of practitioners, this study aimed to learn from successful initiatives and observed effects of decreased environmental stimuli on challenging behavior in residents during anti-pandemic measures.

An online survey among 199 Dutch nursing home practitioners was conducted from November 2020 to January 2021. Practitioners were asked about alleged effects of diminished environmental stimuli in residents with different types of challenging behavior (i.e., psychotic, depressed, anxious, agitated, apathetic) and with mild vs. advanced or without dementia. Also, their opinion about strategies to limit environmental stimuli was explored.

Residents with advanced dementia and those with psychotic and agitated behavior seemed to benefit from diminished environmental stimuli. In contrast, residents without dementia and those with depressive and apathetic behavior seemed to be negatively affected by decreased environmental stimuli. Practitioners indicated that they would like to preserve various strategies to limit environmental stimuli in the future such as reducing the use of corridors adjacent to residents' rooms. Also, they planned to use adjustments and new initiatives regarding organized activities such as an increased use of small-scale and person-oriented activities. Opinions were divided on receiving visitors in the living room and on imposing visiting hours. In open-ended questions, other initiatives were mentioned that can be useful in nursing home care.

Various strategies and initiatives in nursing homes during the pandemic seem promising to meet individual needs. While many residents may be negatively affected by restrictions during the pandemic, specific resident groups may benefit from a decrease in environmental stimuli. These findings underline the importance of a good balance between stimuli and rest in the nursing home, tailored to an individual resident.

401 – Cannabis and Older Adults

Kiran Rabheru, MD, David K. Conn, MBBCh, Claire Checkland, Daria Parsons, MSc

The National Cannabis Survey results indicates that cannabis consumption among older adults has been accelerating at a much faster pace than other age groups in Canada. Internationally, an increasing number of countries and U.S. states have also legalized medical and non-medical cannabis.

More than 1500 physicians, nurse practitioners, other healthcare providers, healthcare students, older adults and caregivers of older adults responded to a needs assessment survey on Cannabis and Older Adults distributed by the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH) in the fall of 2020. Responses showed that 89% of physicians and nurse practitioners and 76% of other healthcare providers are aware of older patients in their practice using cannabis. Despite this fact, only 39% of physicians and nurse practitioners and 26% of other healthcare providers feel strongly or very strongly that they have sufficient knowledge and expertise to address older patients' and their caregivers' questions about cannabis.

Older adults who responded to the survey indicated that their most common reasons for using cannabis were pain, sleep and anxiety. Fifty-one percent responded that they had talked to their doctor or healthcare provider about cannabis but 41% of those older adults stated that their doctor or healthcare provider were unable to answer their questions. Older adults reported they access information on cannabis from the internet (45%), physicians (40%), friends and family (34%), cannabis stores and clinics