

The College

Mental Health Services and Ethnic Minorities

Report of a Joint Meeting of the Section for Social and Community Psychiatry and the Transcultural Psychiatry Society

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This one-day meeting held in London on 12 November 1986 was attended by approximately 150 people, at least 50 applying through the Transcultural Psychiatry Society and at least 65 through the College. In the morning session a team from Bradford (Dr John Bavington, Consultant Psychiatrist, Inderani Sircar, Social Worker, Sayeed Mirza, Community Psychiatry Nurse) described their work in their 'Transcultural Unit'. Since the staff (between them) can speak nearly all the languages used in the area they have no need for interpreters, but they have recently established a specific professional category called 'Communications Assistant' to take responsibility for overall cultural liaison in dealing with families with whose cultures they are not familiar. The speakers highlighted the need for patients from ethnic minorities to identify with the staff running the service and the need for professionals to be sensitive to cultural differences and the linguistic needs of patients.

In the second paper of the morning, Dr Parimala Moodley described a day centre in Brixton to which she is Consultant in a voluntary capacity. This is run by the Fanon Project, having arisen from a perceived need identified by community workers in the area. The original need was for a place that catered for West Indian men who were unemployed and were known to have been in trouble with the law and/or been patients in psychiatric hospitals from time to time. Latterly, the centre has catered for both men and women. The Fanon Centre is organised on democratic lines with the clients determining activities and policies. Medication is not prescribed at the centre, but several of the clients are known to obtain medication from hospitals or general practitioners and presumably have a psychiatric label. Drugs and drink are not allowed at the centre. There has been no serious trouble with violence or any other anti-social activity. The local psychiatric service recognises the necessity of the centre, but there is no specific link between the centre and the psychiatric service. The centre has not been raided by the police and there has been no need for police to be called. The impression of the staff working at the centre is that it is serving a useful function and possibly helping some black people to keep going in difficult social circumstances while avoiding prison or psychiatric hospitals. It provides them with a place that they identify as being concerned with their needs. (*A paper by Dr Moodley describing the Fanon Centre will appear in a future issue of the Bulletin.*)

In the third session, Dr Roland Littlewood described the formation of the 'Forward Planning Group' in Birmingham, with which he has been associated. This group has evolved from the getting together of various community workers and organisations of black and ethnic minorities groups. The main concern in Birmingham has been the apparent failure by the statutory services to meet the needs of the black and ethnic minority people in terms of mental health and social services. The group is formulating policies on community needs, but remains accountable to the community that it is concerned with.

In the afternoon session, two speakers from Park Lane Hospital, Liverpool, described their impressions of people referred to the hospital. Dr Chandra Ghosh outlined the way in which a maximum security hospital is organised and described how West Indian and Asian people get unnecessarily labelled as being dangerous, often with the diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. Mr Ron Tulloch referred to published statistics which show that black people are at a disadvantage in the psychiatric and special hospital system. Both speakers considered that the role of the special hospital is determined by society at large and the general psychiatric services in particular and, therefore the problems within the special hospital should be seen in context rather than in isolation.

In the final session Dr Graham Thornicroft reviewed the literature on over-representations of black people among patients detained under the Mental Health Act and among those diagnosed as schizophrenic. Dr Moodley gave a detailed account of preliminary findings in a study of patients admitted compulsorily to the Maudsley Hospital. There seems to be an over-representation of black patients diagnosed as suffering from 'non specific psychosis' rather than schizophrenia, but this may be the result of the study taking place. An examination of the admission notes indicate that black people are more violent than whites, but the specific instances of violence are not described fully enough in case notes to justify the conclusions made.

There was a discussion after each paper and a general discussion at the end of each session. The range of topics covered included diagnostic categories, the insensitivity of psychiatrists and other professional staff to cultural differences and racism in society, and the importance for the health service to recognise both cultural factors and the effects of racism. The malfunctioning of special hospitals

was discussed as a reflection of society at large. The apparent malfunctioning mental health legislation seemed to suggest that it needs to be carefully monitored to see what is going wrong. The need for psychiatrists to take on racial and cultural issues so that they are reflected in training and recruitment was emphasised throughout the discussion. It was generally agreed that the College as well as other organisations should take action to deal with racism in appointments to the Health Service.

The wider issues of racist practices in South Africa were raised, but not discussed. However, a statement condemning racism in South Africa and urging all mental health workers to refrain from participating in all cultural and scientific events in South Africa, except where they contribute towards the ending of apartheid or have no possible role in promoting it, was circulated and signed by 72 people attending the conference.

Examination Results

Preliminary Test—February 1987

Out of 362 candidates who attempted the examination, 182 passed.

Omar Abdel Karim A. Q. Adas; Elizabeth Anne Arbiter; Philip John Elliot Asherson; Maung Htay Aung; Rachel Elizabeth Baines; Ponnambalam Balakrishnan; Saravanabalasuriyar S. M. Balasuriyar; David Mark Ball; Karen Anne Barback; Barbara Carole Beats; Michael Dominic Beer; Desmond Keith Benn; Sharon Elizabeth Binyon; Jeremy Bird; Jane Blunden; Neil Roderick Boast; Stephen Anthony Boyd; Deirdre Ann Boyland; Joseph Columba Bray; Gerard Michael Burke; Alan Paul Byrne; Timothy Paul Byrne; Elizabeth Jane Margaret Calder; Chee Hung Chan; Ramalingam Nirmalakumar Chithiramohan; Lin Sun Choong Kam Chong; Howard David Vivian Church; Andrew James Cole; Elizabeth Alexandra Corbett; Richard Frissell Crellin; John Stewart Crichton; Joseph Gerard Cunnane; Jennifer Mary Darlington; James Deans; Ian John Deary; Peter Donnelly; Peter Norman Drysdale; Lai Wah Eva Dunn; Louise Catherine Durkin; Barbara Easby; Richard Philip Evans; Sandra Irene Rosamonde Evans; Thomas Augustine Fahy; Gabrielle Mary Faire; Adrian Farrel Falkov; Tak Wing Fan; Anthony Feinstein; Elizabeth Anne Fellow-Smith; Marie Antoinette Therese Ferrari; Paul Michael Myrie Foster; Helena Fox; Aideen Mary Freyne; Ivan Philip Gergel; Deborah Michelle Girling; Judith Margaret Godsland; Margaret Ann Graham; Alison Iola Green; Brian George Green; Moyra Frances Guthrie; Qusay Moosa Abdul Hadi; Bisa Haeger; Lynne Hamilton; May Ibrahim Hamodi; Simon Hatcher; Gwilym Daniel Hayes; Carol Anne Henshaw; Ting Pong Ho; Amanda Caroline Deirdre Hoar; Sara Jacqueline Hobbs; Philip Adam Hodes; Graham Brian Howe; Roger Bruce Howells; Elaine Ann Mary Humphries; Mary Helen Louise Ivinson; Judith Anne Marjorie Jackson; Ann Marie Johnston; Lynne Myfanwy Jones; Dhayanthi Kanagarajah; Sunita Esme Kanagaratnam; Iain Martin Kennedy; Robert William Kerwin; David Andrew Kibel; Brendan Patrick Kirby; Annefrida Zebedayo Kisesa; Peke Yan Kon; Anne Judith Kreeger; Leanda Abigail Kroll; Bobby Kwan Ka

Piu; Marie Laurie; Patrick Declan Leahy; Sing Lee; Timothy James Ewart Leeman; David Li; Leslie Lim Eng Choon; Patricia Anne Lucey; Alexis Lyle; Peter Madeley; Kevin Michael Bernard Malone; David Tobias Martin; Christel Joyce Mavor; Mark Nicholas Alexander Mayall; Sara Elizabeth McCluskey; Melvin Gordon McInnis; Duncan Alexander McRae; Graham Nicholas Meadows; Helen Joan Mears; Stephen Ronald Merson; Sally Mitchison; Colin Edward Alexander Montgomery; Elizabeth Jane Brenda Morris; Susan Diana Morrison; Richard Keith Morriss; Mary Josephine Morton; Michael John Mullan; Elizabeth Margaret Napier; Saifullah Nizamani; Patrick David O'Brien; Louis M. O'Carroll; Jean O'Hara; Zubaidah O'Leary; Katherine Anne O'Neill; Marie-Therese A. O'Neill; Patricia O'Sullivan; Narayana Ravindra Panikker; Amindra Joseph Roshan Perera; Marian Joan Perkins; Kamani Chandrika Petangoda; Roderic Alan Pipe; Jane Jason Potts; Robin Barrington Powell; Basant Kumar Puri; Rajamannar Ramasubbu; Paul Francis Reed; Anne Catherine Reeve; Lawrence Raphael Resneck; Jeremy Victor Resnick; Karl Joseph Rice; Mark Andrew Roberts; David Neil Robertson; Timothy David Rogers; Maureen Claire Royston; Elizabeth Caroline Russell; Joan Rutherford; Mallika Mahojanee Samarasena; Robert Sammut; John Joseph Scanlon; Nicola Karen Scott; Margaret McIndoe Semple; Nicola Hilary Sermin; Dhanji Damji Shah; Helen Elizabeth Sharrard; Jennifer Jayne Shaw; Abdul Jawad Sheikh; Peter Harris Silverstone; Stephen Simmons; Teresa Bernadette Slade; Pauline Souflas; Andrew Peter Soutter; David Henry Stainthorp; John Huw Stone; Julian Paul Strauss; Paul John Sturgiss; Timothy Charles Ayrton Tannock; William John Elton Travers; Martin St John Turner; Wim Van Paesschen; Antonius Gerrit Van Rhijn; Vikram Kumar Watts; Jeremy Neil Weiner; Andrew David Wells; Andrew Mark Wilkinson; Philip Michael John Wilson; Arulanandam Victor Wimalasingham; Linda Elisabet Wolff; Frances Josephine Wren; Simon Ralph Wright; Khalid Hassan Khaled Yasin; Ming Hong Yeung; Nadarasar Yogananthan; Allan Hunter Young; Nizamuddin Ahmad Zaki; Linda Zirinsky.