



WFMH

World Federation for Mental Health

WORLD FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

2011 WFMH World Congress in Cape Town

The 2011 Congress took place in South Africa on 18-21 October at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. Demand for registration was unexpectedly high, and the organizers eventually had to end online applications and manage them through a waiting list. Nearly 900 people attended, for an extensive and well-developed program on the theme “An African Footprint in Global Mental Health.”

The venue in Africa lent itself to a focus on the lack of services in many low-income countries. Various aspects of this situation were explored by Dr. Shekhar Saxena of the World Health Organization and other speakers. Among the topics that received attention in the program were mental health and HIV/AIDS; public mental health; recovery; and the special issues of migrants. At the closing ceremony, consumers issued a Consumer’s Declaration (for details see the WFMH website, www.wfmh.com).

Immediately before the Congress the U.S. National Institute for Mental Health held a meeting for its researchers in the region, and the Global Movement for Mental Health launched the second Lancet Series.

Great credit is due to Prof. Brian Robertson, who headed the Scientific Program Committee; Ingrid Daniels, director of the Cape Mental Health Association and convener of the meeting; and Shona Sturgeon, chair of the South African Federation for Mental Health, the host organization. The hard-working team they assembled developed a conference that excelled in every direction.

New WFMH President Takes Office

At the Members Assembly of the WFMH World Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, Deborah L.Y. Wan began her term of office as President. During her address to the Assembly she said she was proud to be the first Chinese woman from Hong Kong to become President, bringing experience from 28 years as chief executive of an NGO. She recently retired and is now a full-time volunteer providing expertise for the development of the mental health movement in mainland China as well as the Asian region.

Ms. Wan has been involved with WFMH for many years and became an office holder in 2003 as Vice-President of the Asia Pacific Region. In the present difficult economic times she hopes to improve WFMH’s financial stability during her term – and she urged those

present to support the Federation with donations through the web site (www.wfmh.org) or by contacting the secretariat at info@wfmh.com.

President Elect and New WFMH Board of Directors

The President Elect is George Christodoulou (Greece), who will start his term as President at the Members Assembly in 2013. Dr. Christodoulou was the organizer of the WFMH Congress in Athens in 2009.

A new Board of Directors began its term at Cape Town with meetings on 19 and 21 October. The members are:

Officers

Deborah Wan (Hong Kong, SAR) President
George Christodoulou (Greece) President Elect
Tony Fowke (Australia) Immediate Past President
Larry Cimino (USA) Corporate Secretary
Helen Millar (Scotland, UK) Treasurer
Mohammed Abou-Saleh (UK/Qatar) Vice President for Constituency Development
Ellen Mercer (USA) Vice President for Program Development
John Bowis (UK) Vice President for Government Affairs

Regional Vice-Presidents

Africa: Crick Lund (South Africa)
Asia Pacific: Porsche Poh (Singapore)
Eastern Mediterranean: Mohammed Abou-Saleh (UK/Qatar)
Europe: Gabriel Ivbijaro (UK/Nigeria)
Latin America: Sonia Chehil (Canada/Guyana)
North America: Jeffrey Geller (USA)
Oceania: Abd Malak (Australia)

Directors:

Tsuyoshi Akiyama (Japan)
Yoram Cohen (Israel)
Anita Everett (USA)
Diane Froggatt (Canada)
Sylvester Katontoka (Zambia)
Roger Montenegro (Argentina)
Shridhar Sharma (India)
Suchada Sakornsatian (Thailand)

Ms. Wan invited former Board members John Copeland and Patt Franciosi to be Special Advisors for the "Great Push for Mental Health" campaign and the World Mental Health Day campaign respectively.

Secretary General Signs New Agreement

Vijay Ganju signed a new agreement on 18 October to extend his service as WFMH Secretary General, representing the Federation nationally and internationally.

Next WFMH World Congress in Buenos Aires

The Board of Directors has selected Buenos Aires for the next Congress, which will take place on 25-28 August 2013. A delegation from the host organization, the Argentine Association for Mental Health (AASM), met with Board representatives in Cape Town to discuss planning and made a presentation at the closing ceremony of the Congress. Watch the WFMH web site for information as arrangements progress.

September WFMH Meeting in New York

In conjunction with a network of partner organizations, WFMH arranged a meeting in New York on 18 September 2011, immediately before the UN High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Non-Communicable Diseases. The purpose of the meeting was to highlight the role of mental health as an important non-communicable disease (NCD), and one that is also closely associated with other NCDs such as cardiovascular conditions, diabetes and pulmonary disease. The agenda for the UN event gave minimal attention to mental health.

WFMH invited representatives from several governments known to be attentive to mental health in their national health policies. The meeting was addressed by Dr Syeda Hameed, Member of the Indian Government Planning Commission's Health Group; Dr. Nils Daulaire, head of the Global Health Office in the United States Department of Health and Human Services; Helvecio Miranda Magalhaes Junior, Vice Minister of Health of Brazil, and Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, Health Minister of Guyana. Senior Health Ministry officials from Canada and Israel also presented their government's viewpoints during the discussion that followed presentations. A report of the meeting has been posted on the WFMH web site (www.wfmh.org).

November Event at the Pan-American Health Organization

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) held its annual commemoration of World Mental Health Day at its headquarters in Washington D.C. on 10 November 2011 (a month later than usual because of a scheduling conflict). Speakers from PAHO at the symposium were Dr. Socorro Gross-Galiano, Assistant Director, and Dr. Jorge Rodriguez, PAHO's Senior Advisor on Mental Health, who gave a presentation on the current situation of mental health policy and services in Latin America and the Caribbean. Winnie Mitchell represented the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

(SAMHSA) and gave an overview of its current programs. WFMH Secretary General Vijay Ganju closed the meeting with a review of the Federation's recent activities.

WHO Mental Health Atlas 2011

The latest edition of the Mental Health Atlas was released by the World Health Organization on 10 October, World Mental Health Day. The Atlas gives details of resources for mental health care in 184 WHO member states. It shows, as in earlier editions, that the distribution of resources is very uneven, with some countries having few provisions for services. There are countries in Africa and Asia with only one or two psychiatrists to provide specialist care. The 82-page Atlas is available for download in English at:

http://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/mental_health_atlas_2011/en/index.html

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