

NEWSLETTER

World Psychiatric Association - Transcultural Psychiatry Section



Issue IV, 2024

Editorial board:

Sergio Villasenor Bayardo

Goran Mijaljica, Newsletter Editor

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Contribute to the Newsletter

Send us your contributions to
mijaljica@gmail.com

Editorial

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to present the fourth issue of the WPA-TPS Newsletter, the final one for 2024.

It has been exactly one month since the closing ceremony of the WPA Congress in Mexico City—a wonderful gathering of psychiatrists from around the globe, where many Section members contributed as speakers and participants.

During the Congress, we also held a productive Section meeting. It was great to see many members attend both in person and online. In the meeting, we reflected on our activities since the WCP 2023 in Vienna. We are pleased to report that Section membership has grown between the two meetings, and we warmly welcomed our new members, some of whom joined us for this occasion. One of the highlights of our discussion was future collaboration with *Transcultural Psychiatry*, the official journal of the Section. We had an engaging exchange of ideas with Dr. Jarvis, the journal's editor, who participated in the meeting.

Looking ahead to 2025, our plans include continuing the series of webinars, publishing the newsletter, and enhancing outreach efforts—particularly by involving early-career psychiatrists in Section activities. We also discussed potential collaborations with other WPA Sections and the possibility of organizing inter-sectional symposia for the WCP 2025 in Prague.

In addition, we discussed regional-level activities as a way to ensure adequate representation and address practical challenges, such as time zone differences, when organizing meetings and webinars. We warmly welcome your ideas and suggestions for future activities.

Finally, we wish you a joyful holiday season and all the best in 2025!

On behalf of the Editorial Board,

Goran Mijaljica

Announcement - 25th World Congress of Psychiatry

Prague, 5 - 8 October 2025

Conference website:

<https://wcp-congress.com/>

Message from the Editor of Transcultural Psychiatry

The journal Transcultural Psychiatry is the oldest speciality journal of its kind and publishes papers from authors around the world. As the work of the journal expands, we are looking for scholars and colleagues who would like to make a contribution to the scientific community by acting as peer reviewers of submissions. For those who are interested, please contact G. Eric Jarvis, MD, at eric.jarvis@mcgill.ca for more information.

Membership fees

Membership fees for membership in WPA - TPS are discontinued, but we are exploring the possibility of making donations for specific projects within the section. We will provide a more detailed information in the upcoming months.

WPA - TPS Webinar “Many faces of war: conceptualizing war trauma and PTSD”

Webinar was held on October 23rd 2024, speaker: Goran Mijaljica

The webinar provided an overview of knowledge on war trauma, as well as concepts of war trauma and PTSD.

War trauma can be considered a consequence of traumatic experiences faced during wartime, and can include many different types of events, such as loss, destruction, violence, torture, etc. However, studies report that even experiences such as lack of water, food or shelter have been experienced as traumatic by those who have lived in a conflict zone. The prevalence rates of psychiatric conditions, such as depression, anxiety and PTSD are two to three times higher in persons exposed to armed conflict.

The individuality of experiences, complex emotions connected to a range of experiences during a longer time period, differences in experience of war within groups of refugees - e.g. depending on social status, geography, potential role in the armed conflict, etc. It was also argued that the experiences are not only limited to experience of loss, physical injury, death, destruction or participation/witnessing armed conflict. The importance and the role of involuntary displacement, refugee status, and the effects of perceived justice / injustice are some of the important aspects brought up during the webinar.

The fourth webinar is planned for February / March 2025, more information will be available shortly.

We are delighted to invite you to our inaugural 2024 lecture of Transcultural Medicine.

Unique opportunity to delve in to the intersection of Global Mental Health.

We invite you to our international Circles of Transcultural Medicine 2024, followed by Samuel O. Okpaku M.D., Ph.D., the President of the Center for Health, Culture and Society.

Topic: **Essentials of Global Mental Health**
How important is Knowledge of Cultural Medicine

Speaker: Samuel O. Okpaku M.D., Ph.D.
Moderation: Dr. Szymon Goliszewski-Brodawski

11. November 2024, 14. PM-18.30 PM European Time
Online-Zoom-Meeting
Informations and Registration: tagung@mitk.eu

Institute of Transcultural Medicine, Bielefeld www.mtk.eu

Am I My Brother's Keeper

An Overview of Global Mental Health /Health History, Challenges, Opportunities, and Criticisms

Delivered on November 6, 2024 by Samuel O. Okpaku M.D., Ph.D. Founder and CEO Center for Health, Culture, and Society and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry George Washington University Washington, D.C.

This lecture reviewed the history of globalization and its importance for global health and global mental health. It mentions the UN instruments, the Millenium Development Fund, and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Social Determinants of Health. A global epidemiology of mental health with burden of disease was discussed. Okpaku suggested a newer and more comprehensive definition for global mental health. This takes into account a dimensional background to any global mental health project. These dimensions are historical, economic, political, and sociocultural. More importantly for any project to be labeled global mental health, it should meet the following 5 criteria:

- I) A universal and transnational criteria e.g. poverty and stigma
- II) A public health criterion e.g. violence
- III) Stakeholders' criteria e.g. the composition of the stakeholders should be international in either bilateral or multilateral arrangements
- IV) Problem ownership: the problem should be owned by the recipient organization, institution, or country
- V) Team criterion i.e. the teams engaged in the project should be multidisciplinary and multiparty

This dimensional approach brings more rigor and discipline to the field. It also helps to distinguish global mental health from community mental health as the two movements have different philosophical backgrounds. With the above as a background the lecture addressed the implications for global menta health. It addressed:

- 1) How significant a problem mental health is in low- and middle-income countries
- 2) What evidence is there for cost effective interventions
- 3) What are the developed countries the U.S. and the UK doing with reference to the International Agreement of 1970. This agreement was that developed countries will contribute 0.7% of their Gross National Income to overseas development. At present only 4 countries consistently meet these goals.
- 4) A strategic template to provide guidelines for foreign aid was also discussed.
- 5) The lecture concluded with attempts to predict the future of global mental health

The Online lecture was organized by the Department of Transcultural Medicine in Germany- www.mtk.eu and became the certification of the Medical Department of Germany/ ÄKWL with 6 Points. 20 Physicians from Austria and Germany joined the Lecture via Webex .

Travel Stipend WPA Congress 2024:

The WPA TPS awarded two travel stipends this year, and the recipients were Dr. Sonam Saxena from India and Dr. Claudia Castellanos from Mexico. The purpose of the stipend was to facilitate participation of early career psychiatrists with proven interest in transcultural psychiatry at the WPA Congress in Mexico City, 14-17 November 2024. This year's recipients have kindly agreed to share with us a reflection of their participation at the WPA Congress in Mexico City.

Reflections from WPA Congress 2024.

Sonam Saxena (India)

It was an immense privilege to attend the Transcultural Psychiatry Section (TPS) Board Meeting of the World Psychiatric Association during the WPA Congress on 16th November 2024, at Mexico City. Being selected as a travel fellowship recipient for this meeting was a significant honor, and the experience has been both professionally enriching and deeply inspiring.

The meeting explored global challenges, including migration-related mental health issues, the impact of globalization, and cultural determinants of mental health outcomes. A significant highlight was the focus on transcultural perspectives in war conflict, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive mental health interventions for displaced populations and survivors.

As a Senior Resident in Psychiatry at Institute of Human Behavioural and Allied Sciences (IHBAS), Delhi, a center of mental excellence in India, I focus on transcultural differences in the presentation, perception, and treatment of addictive disorders. Managing patients from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds has highlighted the critical role of culture in addiction patterns, stigma, and help-seeking behavior. The meeting's discussions on culturally informed interventions and therapeutic frameworks deeply resonated with my work, aligning with my efforts to explore how cultural factors influence substance use behaviors and treatment outcomes.

The opportunity to interact with global leaders in transcultural psychiatry was transformative. Learning from their experiences and insights expanded my perspective on creating holistic and inclusive mental health policies and practices. This experience has strengthened my resolve to advocate for mental health care that respects cultural diversity while striving for equity. I am deeply grateful to the WPA TPS for facilitating my participation and supporting my professional growth.

Dr. Sonam Saxena, Senior Resident, Department of Psychiatry, IHBAS, Delhi, India

E - mail: dr.sonamsaxena19@gmail.com

World Psychiatric Association Congress 2024 attendance experience. *Claudia Castellanos (Mexico)*

Facilitated by the WPA-Transcultural Psychiatry Section Travel Stipend

My name is Claudia Castellanos, I'm a medical doctor and an early career psychiatrist (just graduated on February this same year), from Guadalajara, Mexico. I recently got to attend the WPA 2024 congress in Mexico City, all thanks to a travel award provided by the Transcultural Psychiatry Section, which I joined early this year. I first heard about the opportunity because of the section newsletter and immediately decided to try, by the of October 2024 I got positive news on the matter when Dr. Goran, the section secretary, informed me through an e-mail that my application was approved.

My experienced attending the congress was enjoyable from the beginning, I arrived early on November 14th to the World Trade Center, where the congress took place, once I registered and got my name-tag badge I went to the opening plenary session, from there and off to the rest of the congress I continued entering the sessions and symposiums I was most interested in, as well as seeing the poster's presentations. That day ended with a welcome reception and a toast. By the second day I had the opportunity to meet chairs, co-chairs and secretaries from other of the WPA sections, I also had the chance to moderate the symposium entitled "Trauma experienced by migrants depicted in literature" a joint symposium between Literature and mental health section and the Transcultural Psychiatry section, presented by Dr. Sergio Villaseñor, Dr. Renato Alarcón and Dr. Ekaterina Sukhanova, this was my first time moderating such a big presentation and was very nervous, but all three presenters encourage me and the experience ended up being very positive and enriching.

During this first event I learned things that would be helpful for me the very next day, since one of the first sessions of the day was going to test my just gained experience as a moderator, this time in company of Dr. Villaseñor in a State-of-the-art session entitled "Literature and psychiatry: Topics, links global perspectives". The session was presented by Dr. Renato Alarcón and was one of my favorite experiences of the whole congress, not only I got to listen to an expert in such an interesting topic but I got to be by his side and introduce him to the audience, finally being able to thank him and share my opinions. Later the same day I met the rest of the Transcultural Psychiatry Sections members that were able to attend the congress, most of them came from countries such as Australia, Sweden, India, United States and France, some of them couldn't make it to Mexico but joined us from afar as the meeting was also transmitted live via zoom. This was my first time meeting in person with doctors I've had the chance to talk only via e-mail, thanks to this opportunity I also gained news perspectives on topics I don't see as often in my country, I learned a lot from the experts and even was introduce to them alongside the other member awarded with the travel stipend by the Transcultural Psychiatry Section. We share our experience being given this opportunity helping us to attend the congress and I believe it was a rewarding for both of us.

I personally gained so much knowledge and professional growth during this event, which I wouldn't have been able to attend without this kind of support from the WPA-TPS. I know they are many others as me, from medical students, psychiatry residents or early career psychiatrist in need of this opportunities, which I'm greatly thankful for and I hope they continue to encourage the new generations.