



# WORLD FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

## *Fédération Mondiale pour la Santé Mentale*

### NEWSLETTER

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## EXPERT PANEL EXPLORES TRANSCULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

The WFMH Center for Transcultural Mental Health convened its first major activity in Dulles, Virginia, on February 28–March 1, bringing together 16 international leaders in mental health services, education, policy, and multicultural issues. The panel represented 8 countries: Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, India, The Netherlands, Zambia and the United States. WFMH Past President Dr. L. Patt Franciosi chaired the forum.

The purpose of this meeting was to gather advice to help WFMH prepare a broad initiative on the impact of culture on mental health. The panel was invited to share perspectives and make recommendations on such topics as:

- The importance of culture and the migration experience in determining risk and protective factors in mental health
- The promotion of the concept that consumers and their families from diverse backgrounds are key stakeholders in the design and delivery of culturally competent mental health services
- The need for a culturally competent workforce to provide appropriate mental health services
- A recovery focus respecting consumers' personal, cultural and spiritual belief systems, and that of their families, caregivers and communities in service delivery

- Culturally appropriate service models, shown to be effective and sustainable in the long term, as part of mainstream mental health care

The two-day meeting produced many viewpoints on the complexity of working among different cultures. Professor Laurence J. Kirmayer (McGill University, Canada) gave a presentation on the first evening about the

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### WFMH 2007 CONFERENCE ON TRANSCULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD

**Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA  
October 29–31, 2007**

WFMH is planning this conference with a collaborative of Minnesota-based mental health, social service and cultural organizations.

The First Announcement and Call for Abstracts will be posted on the WFMH website [www.wfmh.org](http://www.wfmh.org) in mid-March.

To be placed on a mailing list for updates, please contact Ellen Mercer at: [Emercer@wfmh.com](mailto:Emercer@wfmh.com)



*At the Dulles meeting (left to right): Joop de Jong (Netherlands); Mario Hernandez (USA); Helen Herrman (Australia); Dennis Hunt (USA); Sylvester Katontoka (Zambia); Laurence Kirmayer (Canada); Roger Montenegro (Argentina).*



Dr. Margaret Chan

## New Director-General for WHO

On 4 January Dr. Margaret Chan of China took office as the new Director-General of the World Health Organization. She was appointed at the World Health Assembly in November 2006 for a term of office lasting until June 30, 2012. Previously she had been WHO's Assistant Director-General for Communicable Diseases and Representative of the Director-General for Pandemic Influenza.

"I want my leadership to be judged by the impact of our work on the health of two populations: women and the people of Africa," Dr. Chan said. "WHO has a long history of commitment to those in greatest need, including the most vulnerable groups."

She has set out priority areas on which she intends to focus WHO's work: development of health, health security, building the capacity of health systems, developing better information and knowledge, enhancing partnerships and improving WHO's performance.

Prior to joining WHO Dr. Chan was Director of Health in Hong Kong for nine years. While in that post she led the response to the severe outbreak of SARS in Hong Kong in 2003.

### RECENTLY PUBLISHED RESOURCES

#### **Disease control priorities related to mental, neurological, developmental and substance abuse disorders**

(World Health Organization, 2006, 120 pages). This publication brings together five chapters from *Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (2006)* and a conclusion by WHO. The chapters cover mental disorders, neurological disorders, learning and developmental disabilities, and alcohol and substance abuse. The purpose of this special package is to provide information on the cost-effectiveness of interventions for these specific groups of disorders. It should contribute to the reformulation of policies and programs and the reallocation of resources, eventually leading to a reduction of morbidity and mortality. (US\$22.50 – available from WHO PRESS – [www.who.int/bookorders](http://www.who.int/bookorders).)

**The Health of the People: The African Health Report** (WHO Regional Office for Africa, 2006, 196 pages). *The Health of the People: The African Regional Health Report* is the first

report to focus on the health of the 738 million people living in the African Region of the World Health Organization. The illustrated 196-page book provides expert analysis of all the key areas of public health in Africa. It also contains the most comprehensive annex to date of health statistics for the region. (US\$30.00 – available from WHO PRESS – [www.who.int/bookorders](http://www.who.int/bookorders).)

#### **Drinking in Context: Patterns, Interventions, and Partnerships**

(Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, New York, 2007. Editors: Gerry Stimson, Marcus Grant, Marie Choquet, Preston Garrison). In most countries there is widespread social pressure on individuals to drink beverage alcohol. Yet some drinking patterns can lead to serious physical, mental, and social harms. *Drinking in Context* is intended to complement existing volumes dealing with international alcohol policy by focusing on three main themes: drinking patterns, targeted interventions, and partnership development. Ordering information in the UK, Europe and Asia is at [book.orders@tandf.co.uk](mailto:book.orders@tandf.co.uk), and for the USA and Canada at [cserve@routledge-ny.com](mailto:cserve@routledge-ny.com).

### Award for Beverly Long



Former WFMH President Beverly Benson Long received a special award on 11 October at the opening ceremony of the Fourth World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders in Oslo, Norway. The award was given jointly by the World Federation for Mental Health and the Global Consortium for Promotion and Prevention in Mental Health to recognize her visionary leadership. Her commitment to the international advocacy movement for the prevention of mental disorders has been unwavering over many years.

*Multicultural Mental Health*  
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issues, noting that Australia has an immigrant population of 20%, Canada 17%, Switzerland 16%, the United States 11.5%, and Sweden 6%. Mental health services in such countries are driven by Western concepts, but service delivery is challenged by the languages and cultures of immigrants. He recommended the development of multidisciplinary teams with strong links to local communities, trained interpreters, and "culture brokers" who can explain cultural traits to mental health workers.

Issues affecting poor countries were also discussed. In Africa, mental health services are often very limited (sometimes with one psychiatrist per country). Multicultural issues arise from labor migration, tribal differences and, in some cases, huge numbers of refugees. Sylvester Katontoka, a consumers' leader from Zambia, referred to the country's many tribal groups and 70 languages. His network has been successful in getting government officials to increase attention to consumers' views, but is trying to address how to work with traditional healers.

A number of special concerns in multicultural mental health were examined. Nancy Wallace (WFMH Main Representative at the UN) and Oliver Williams (University of Minnesota) drew attention to violence against women. Jacqueline Weekers from the International Organization for Migration discussed the human rights of refugees and displaced persons, and the wide variety of social issues such as housing and education that affect mental health.

Joop de Jong (Medical Director, Amsterdam Municipal Health Services, The Netherlands), Helen Herman (Australian International Health Institute) and Yu Xin (Institute of Mental Health, Peking University, China) spoke about the imbalances that arise from research drawn largely from Western countries.

*The WFMH Center for Transcultural Mental Health is supported by grants from Eli Lilly and Company and Boehringer Ingelheim.*

## MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW FOR THE 2007 WFMH WORLD MENTAL HEALTH CONGRESS IN HONG KONG

The Organizing Committee for the 2007 WFMH World Mental Health Congress extends a most cordial invitation to individuals representing all aspects of the worldwide mental health movement to participate in the 19 – 23 August 2007 Congress in Hong Kong, SAR China. The Congress theme is **"Impact of Culture on Mental Health: East Meets West."**

The Congress Organizing Committee, chaired by Professor KY MAK and Ms. Deborah WAN, has formulated an informative program covering five tracks: Importance of Environment on Mental Health; Cultural Issues and Mental Health; Advance of Care and Treatment; Trends in Promotion and Prevention; and Consumers and Caregivers. Post-Congress tours have also been arranged to major cities in Mainland China to promote cultural exchange.

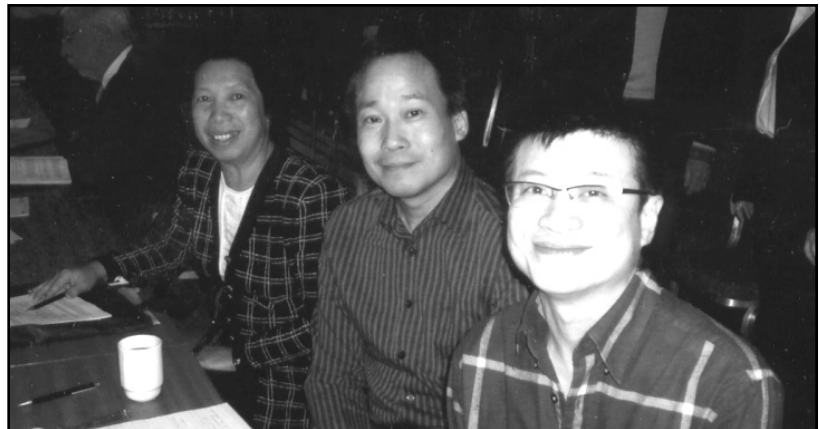
The Congress has been designed to bring together international and local experts with diverse backgrounds, including mental health practitioners, community partners, service users and family caregivers to address a wide variety of topics of significant interest in mental health. It will provide a valuable platform where delegates from all

over the world can meet, network, and exchange knowledge about practices in mental health service, policy and advocacy issues.

**The Second Announcement contains complete information on registration, abstract submission, accommodations, program, and post-Congress tours. The deadline for abstracts is 15 March. Late abstracts will be considered where there are gaps in workshop tracks. All information is available on the website at [www.wmhc2007.com](http://www.wmhc2007.com).**

The 2007 WFMH World Mental Health Congress is being organized by WFMH and the Hong Kong Mental Health Congress Limited, a collaboration of the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong, the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, and the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists. Co-hosting organizations are the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (the Congress venue) and MINDSET, a Jardine Matheson Group Charity on mental health. The World Health Organization is a cosponsoring organization for the 2007 Congress.

For information in the USA, contact D. Maguire at [dmaguire@wfmh.com](mailto:dmaguire@wfmh.com).



*Attending the WFMH Board of Directors meeting in Oslo to report on planning for the Hong Kong Congress: Deborah Wan, Executive Director of the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association; Wai Shing Chung (center), Chief Officer for Service, Mental Health Association of Hong Kong; and Michael Wong Chun Hon, Chief Officer for Education, Mental Health Association of Hong Kong.*



## A New Leader at the Finnish Association for Mental Health

The basic conditions for a good life should be guaranteed for all people, contributing to a foundation for increased mental well-being. This is how Marita Ruohonen, the new Executive Director of the Finnish Association for Mental Health (FAMH), sees the challenges that face both society and her own organization.

Having worked for 30 years on social issues, the prevention of poverty and marginalization has been particularly close to Marita Ruohonen's heart throughout her career. When she took up her position at FAMH last autumn, she was struck by how blurred the division of responsibilities has become in the field of mental health promotion. "Mental health is commonly perceived along the continuum of health and illness," she says. "As a result,

things that have to do with everyday life and survival are automatically foisted onto the shoulders of social and health-care services, even though the majority of solutions that promote mental health are implemented by other sectors of society."

Ms. Ruohonen has twice served as the chairperson of the European Anti-Poverty Network in Finland, and has remained an active member. The Finnish network currently counts about 30 Finnish civic organizations among its members. She has also thrown herself actively into European mental health work. In spring 2006 she was elected to the Board of Mental Health Europe. Thinking internationally, she says: "A secure livelihood is one of the basic requirements of mental health and a good quality of life. It is important that here, too, Finland participates in the globalization discourse, which extends beyond our borders . . . responsibility cannot stop at the borders of any one country."

## INFORMATION AND AWARENESS PACKET ON SCHIZOPHRENIA AND YOUNG ADULTS AVAILABLE FROM WFMH SOON

"Recognizing and Understanding Schizophrenia in Young Adults" is an international information and awareness packet designed for the benefit and understanding of specific audiences. It contains fact sheets for counselors, students and families of individuals who experience schizophrenia. The goals of the packet are to highlight how college-aged young adults view schizophrenia, the incidence of the disorder in this age group, and factors that serve as barriers to effective recognition, treatment, and rehabilitation.

WFMH developed the new international information and awareness packet in the hope that the materials contained in it will help young people who are experiencing the symptoms of schizophrenia, and to raise awareness of the disorder among students, par-

ents and families, staff of college and university student health and counseling services, and other adults who work with young adults in college and university environments. The packet can serve to promote the goal of affording timely identification, diagnosis, intervention and treatment to help overcome and manage schizophrenia among the young adult population.

"Recognizing and Understanding Schizophrenia in Young Adults" will be available by request from the WFMH Secretariat in May 2007. To order a copy, please contact Debbie Maguire, WFMH Director of Programs, at [dmaguire@wfmh.com](mailto:dmaguire@wfmh.com).

*This project was made possible by an unrestricted educational grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb, which had no involvement in the content or preparation of the materials.*

## Are You a WFMH Member?

This number of the Newsletter is going to many friends of the Federation. If you wish to continue receiving it please be sure that your membership is up-to-date. If you are not yet a member, join us now! We need you and you need an NGO (non-governmental organization) accredited as a mental health consultant at the U.N. Fees for individual membership: developed countries, \$35; OECD developing countries, \$15; life member \$500; and library \$35 (U.S.). Your inquiries or check should go to: WFMH, 6564 Loisdale Court, Suite 301, Springfield, Virginia 22150-1812, USA.

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**The WFMH Newsletter is published by the World Federation for Mental Health for its members.**

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