

## **R E P O R T**

### **PROGRAMS TO MARK MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2007**

#### **AT DEPT. OF PSYCHIATRY, DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA HOSPITAL, NEW DELHI**

##### **Background:**

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, Ministry of Health Government of India (established in 1932) is a tertiary care general hospital offering free services to all patients who register with it, from all over North India. The Department of Psychiatry Dr RMLH was the first to open Psychiatric services in a general hospital setting in Delhi decades ago. It offers both indoor and outdoor services including a 40-bed inpatient unit and outpatient facilities treating an average of 250 – 300 patients per day. It also provides emergency services, consultations and referrals for the other services in this hospital. The Psychiatry Department is situated on the other side of the road from the main hospital buildings.

##### **Philosophy:**

Based on principles formulated by the World Federation for Mental Health, we began Mental Health Week celebrations last year. The principles we base our programs on, are as follows:

- Mental Health concerns everyone,
- Anyone can experience mental health problems,
- Individuals, organizations and communities can take positive steps to promote mental health,
- People with mental health problems have a valuable contribution to make,
- We all have mental health needs, whether or not we currently have mental health problems.

Hence our goal is to involve as many people NOT using mental health services as possible for mental health week programs.

##### **Initiating mental health week programs:**

Mental Health Day was being celebrated passively in this department till last year. In 2006, the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health, Government of India encouraged us to celebrate this Day appropriately. Subsequently we were offered financial support by the Central Council for Yoga and Naturopathy, AYUSH, Ministry of Health, Govt. of India (another branch of the same Ministry). Accordingly we celebrated Mental Health Week for the first time in this Department last year with the following programs:

1. A Walk from Dr. RMLH to India Gate at 4 PM on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 06 (Sunday)
2. Booklet (English) published on 'Building Awareness-Reducing Risk: Mental Illness and Suicide'.
3. Awareness and Contact Program in the General Outpatients Department of Dr. RMLH.
4. Pledge for making every day a Mental Health Day.

##### **Acknowledgements- Mental Health Week Programs, 2007:**

I thank the World Health Organization (South East Asia Region), Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health Government of India and the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN), AYUSH, Ministry of Health, Govt. of India for their financial support in organizing these programs. I also thank Dr. N. K. Chaturvedi, Medical Superintendent without whose active help and support these programs would not have been possible. The administration at Dr RMLH especially the Deputy Director (Adm.) Shri Anil Kumar provided a lot of active help.

I am deeply grateful to **Dr. S. N. Pandey, ARO**, Special Yoga and Naturopathy Unit for Psychiatry and Cardiology, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN) without whose active participation and advice these programs would not have been possible.

These activities were supported by personnel from the research projects 'Genetic Susceptibility in Schizophrenia' (funded by the National Institute of Health, Government of USA), 'Training Program in Psychiatric Genetics in India' (funded by the Fogarty Institute, National Institute of Health, Government of USA) and 'An exploratory analysis of genetic correlates & effects of yoga on circadian rhythms, cognitive functions, social burden in major mental disorders: Schizophrenia (Sz), Bipolar disorder (BD1) & Depression (MDD) and their comparison with a Cardiac group' (funded by Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN), AYUSH, Ministry of Health, Govt. of India).

### **Aims, Mental Health Week, 2007:**

- To involve ordinary people in the mental health movement,
- Reach benefits of mental health to deprived and neglected urban communities,
- Improve mental health awareness in general patients and hospital staff.

To achieve this aim we undertook the following programs (see Table overleaf):

1. Walk involving people from diverse walks of life,
2. Publishing books with mental health messages deriving from the annual slogans of the World Federation for Mental Health,
3. Hospital program in the general out patients department, to increase awareness about mental health,
4. Community program in an urban slum where we will now begin to offer mental health services,
5. Increase self esteem of patients by involving them actively in these programs, and
6. Pledge by hospital and mental health workers to work for the mentally ill.

### **Description of Activities:**

1. **Walk:** The Walk was the most popular program this year too. People and organizations invited themselves for it. More than 1000 people participated and most of them were NOT primarily involved with the mentally ill. People from all ages, sexes and regions participated.

The walk took place from the Department of Psychiatry Dr RMLH, to India Gate. The Medical Superintendent, Dr RMLH flagged off the Walk with a flag bearing the twin logos of the WFMH and the RMLH. T-shirts, caps, and flags bearing mental health messages were distributed and carried by participants.

The number of participant organizations increased significantly from last year.

The morale of participants was high, and they took care to display their mental health messages throughout the walk to all passers by.

The Walk was covered by the national media. *The national TV channel, Door Darshan News, broadcast a description on its weekly international summary program the next Saturday (October 13). Thus our message reached the entire country and overseas too.*

At India Gate officials from the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health Government of India welcomed the participants. These were- Dr. P.H. Anathanarayanan, DDG (M),

Dr. Jagdish Kaur (CMO-NMHP) and Dr. S. K. Sinha (Consultant). The program concluded with thanks from Dr. N. K. Chaturvedi, Medical Superintendent, Dr. RMLH.

The Walk concluded with snacks and fruit juice.

**2. Publication of books:** With funds from the WHO (SEAR) we could publish two booklets this year. The first, a bilingual English- Hindi publication entitled 'Many paths, one goal: mental health - Mental health in a changing world: the impact of culture and diversity' was based on the current mental health message for 2007. The second was in Hindi and entitled 'Jankari Badhyein- Khatra ghatayein, manorog wa atmahatya', was the Hindi translation of the English booklet we published last year. There was great demand for its Hindi translation. We also felt the 2006 message would be more appropriate for our slum community brethren.

The first booklet was released on October 7 just before the Walk by Shri Verghese Samuel, Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India, Dept. of AYUSH. Shri Ashok Ahuja, Vice- Chairperson New Delhi Municipal Corporation and MLA, and Shri Ramakant Goswami Member of Legislative Assembly of Delhi along with a number of other dignitaries were present.

The second, Hindi booklet was released for the community by Shri Prem Bhardwaj, Chief of Seva Dal , during the Community Mental Health Awareness Program at Kathputli Colony.

Both booklets have been published by the Department with a grant for the World Health Organization and are co-authored by Dr. Smita Deshpande, Head Dept of Psychiatry at Dr RMLH and Dr. S. N. Pandey, ARO, Specialized OPD (Yoga & Naturopathy) for Cardiac & Psychiatry Patients at Dr. RMLH (a Unit of Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy- CCRYN).

**3. Patient activities:** We thank the interns of the Jamia Hamdard University and the Delhi Institute of Rural Development, interning at the Occupational Therapy Services of the Department of Psychiatry, DR RMLH for training the Day Care patients for two presentations-

a. A song : Hum hongey kamayab (We shall overcome)

b. A skit advocating proper treatment for mental illness.

These were presented at the Community Mental Health Awareness Program on October 11 at Kathputli Colony; and at the Pledge ceremony on October 12, in the Day Care Center of Dept. of Psychiatry, Dr RMLH.

#### **4. Hospital based programs:**

a.. General Awareness Program: Since the Out Patients Department of the RMLH is at a distance from the Dept. of Psychiatry, many patients are unaware of the services offered. Since last year we began an education and awareness program in the general OPD where patients are told about efficacy of treatment for mental illness, and booklets are distributed (the need for 2006 message booklet in Hindi was repeatedly expressed here last year). This year student nurse from the School of Nursing, Dr RMLH presented a skit advocating proper treatment for mental illness, which was much appreciated.

b. Pledge: At the end of the mental health Week we held a ceremony to Pledge to continue to take this work forward. The Medical Superintendent, Dr. N. K. Chaturvedi presided. The programme began with a rousing song by Day care attendees, and was followed by skits by student nurses and Day Care attendees. Dr. S. D. Dwivedi Director, Navjyoti India Foundation, administered the pledge. We aim to increase awareness of mental health in our adopted slum community and provide them healthy lifestyle alternatives. Yoga and lifestyle intervention programmes conducted by the CCRYN will be models for this purpose. Organizations such as the National Service Scheme have promised to provide support for this ongoing work.

## 5. Community programs

**a. Walk-** please see above.

**b. Community Mental Health Awareness Program:** This was held on October 11, at 3 PM in the Rajasthani Park of the Kathputli Colony, Pandav Nagar. The locally active NGO Children's Hope Prayas, which is working with the children of this area, cooperated with us. Their children presented some beautiful items- quawwalis and dances- which enlivened the proceedings. Dr. B. T. C. Murthy, Director, CCRYN presided over the function. Local political leaders also attended, released the booklet and promised to support the proposed Mental Health Initiative. Dr. Gopal ji Deputy Program Advisor, National Service Scheme, our Special Guest, promised all help from this vast organization to make the campaign a success. The Chief Guest was Dr. P. B. Baruah, Head, Dep't. Of Radiology Dr. RMLH and the hospital administration was represented by Shri Anil Kumar, Deputy Director, Administration, Dr. RMLH who quoted poetry in support of the campaign.

We took packets of germinated pulses (health food) and caps with the Mental Health logo for distribution in the community. However when we began distribution there was a near riot situation! So we left them with Prayas and announced that people who wanted these could obtain them from its office.

## 6. Publicity:

In spite of our efforts we could not garner as much support from the media as one would have expected considering the scale of programs. This could also be due to the traditional ignorance of mental health matters. However we plan to try other more effective means of media coverage next year or hold a press conference before Mental Health Day.

Newspaper clippings are attached. Two national newspapers covered our events; a local Hindi newspaper did so comprehensively. As mentioned above DD News broadcast our Walk all over the world.

**Novel publicity:** Since last year we distribute T-shirts and caps with the Mental Health Day logo to participants of the Walk. This proves a very effective and long lasting means of publicizing Mental Health Day. This year we also distributed T-shirts at WHO-SEAR, DGHS and RMLH administrative offices with a request to wear them on October 10. Many people did so, thus increasing awareness.

## Future Plans

We plan to add more activities next year with the help and support of existing as well as new groups. We request the help and support of all person and organizations involved with mental health for this endeavor.