

INTERNATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH (2470)

ORGANISERS: Dr Vikram Patel, Dr Mary De Silva

TIMETABLE SLOT: Term 2 - D2

AIM

To acquaint students with the public health significance of mental health in the international context.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- (i) understand the broad classification of major mental disorders. Be aware of the existing evidence on aetiology and treatment of mental disorder;
- (ii) explain the public health significance of mental illness from an international perspective,
- (iii) understand the application of epidemiological research methods to the study of international mental health;
- (iv) understand the influence of historical, cultural, socio-economic, and discrimination on mental illness and mental health service delivery;
- (v) understand how mental health policies are made; and
- (vi) understand how mental health issues are related to and can be integrated with public health priorities, such as reproductive health, conflict and primary health care.

CONSTITUTENCY

This module is intended for those interested in the relevance of mental health to epidemiology, international public health and health policy. It is equally suitable for students with or without a background in mental health and allied professions. This is a jointly run study module accessed by students both from the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE

1. Basic concepts: What is mental illness? What distinguishes it from unusual behaviour? How are mental illnesses classified?. What are the major types of mental illness, and what is their impact at different levels of the health care system ? What are the mental illnesses at the extremes of life (childhood, old age)? How effective are treatments for mental disorders?
2. How do concepts of mental illness vary across cultures? What are the challenges in assessing mental disorders in cross-cultural comparative research, and how have these been met? How might cultural factors and differences in health systems influence the delivery of health services?
3. The public health significance of mental illness in a rapidly developing world: Why are mental disorders of global public health significance? What are the links between mental health and international development? How is mental health relevant to factors promoting and delaying human development - poverty, literacy, gender bias, urbanization, migration, conflict? And the links with established health priorities for lower income countries - reproductive health, infant development and child health, infectious disease? What are the experiences of discrimination and stigma associated

with mental illness?

4. Application of epidemiological methods to the study of international mental health: How can epidemiology research assist in raising awareness and informing policy and practice? What are the issues to be considered when applying research methods across cultures? What are the priority areas for epidemiological and health services research in mental illness from an international perspective?

5. How are mental health policies made in the international context? How is mental health care integrated within health systems? What models of primary care and community care are effective and acceptable?

TEACHING STRATEGY

Teaching faculty will be drawn from the LSHTM and the Institute of Psychiatry. Teaching methods will include: essential reading materials (including: the Lancet series on Global Mental Health (2007); articles from psychiatric research in both developed and developing countries); established measures of psychiatric morbidity; critical appraisal of selected research papers; small group practicals; and Powerpoint based lectures.

LEARNING TIME

Approximate total learning time is 100 hours: 40 hours contact time, 60 hours reading and assessment time.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment to be taken in the individual's own time and will be based on a choice of one of two essay questions relating to mental health epidemiology and/or health services and policy.