

Editorial



Message from Issue Editor

T L Lo

Chairman, The Mental Health Association of Hong Kong

Dr. Lo Wai-hoi was the longest serving Consultant-in-charge of the Government Mental Health Services in Hong Kong. He was also a founding member as well as immediate past President (2002-2006) of the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong. In memory of the late Dr. Lo Wai-hoi, one of the most respectful local figures in Mental Health, the current issue of the Hong Kong Journal of Mental Health comprising of the Association's published articles written by him is compiled.

Under the astute leadership of Dr. Lo Wai-hoi, we have witnessed the advancement of the science and act in Psychiatry since 1950s in Hong Kong. In these seasoned decades of rapid economic growth, Mental Health Services in Hong Kong have undergone progressive development and prolific metamorphosis. The collection of paper series on the organisation of psychiatric services and development of legislation for the mentally ill in Hong Kong serves as valuable archives for those who like to study the history of Mental Health Service in Hong Kong.

The second paper series are articles on childhood Schizophrenia and clinical conditions affecting children written in 1970s. This is also the time when the first long-term follow-up study of Chinese Schizophrenics in Hong Kong was published in the esteemed British Journal of Psychiatry. These early

insights certainly paved the way to the development of Early Assessment Service for Youth with Psychosis (EASY) in early 2000s and subsequently similar service to adults with First Episode Psychosis (FEP). These scientific documentation of a range of clinical conditions in childhood, seemingly the most complete and organised local observations, have brought about gradual development of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry as a subspecialty and cluster-based multidisciplinary Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services in Hong Kong.

An analysis of 684 cases of suicide as inquired into the Coroners in 1981 was reported during the 5th PM Yap Memorial Lecture delivered on 27th September 1985. Though not necessary a direct reflection of clinical outcomes of psychiatric conditions nor a totally accurate proxy on the quality of Mental Health Services, the interest in the study of suicide and attempted suicide was taken on by the Hong Kong Jockey Club in the subsequent years. The Centre of Suicide Research and Prevention funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club was set up at the University of Hong Kong in the 90s. This was a timely provision to Hong Kong, for those who remember, when suicide rate rocketed during the years of Asia Financial Tsunami. Continuous territory-wide monitoring on the rate of suicide and innovative preventive

strategies based on research findings are in place since then.

Social Work plays an important role in Mental Health Services. Psychogeriatrics had been used as an illustrative example on development of Medical Social Services to address social factors that cause illness and social problems that result from illness. A case on cooperation and collaboration of medical care and social work namely the proposed district-based psychogeriatric services in the betterment of clinical outcomes of psychogeriatric conditions was beautifully painted. Nowadays, community support for severe mental illness namely the district-based Personalised Care Programme as well as the territory-wide Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness have been set up. The ethos of creative synergy between psychiatric services and social rehabilitation by Social Welfare Department and Non-government Organizations for better community support of the mentally ill has become a reality in Hong Kong.

The Mental Health Association has long tradition of public mental health education service since her inception six decades ago. The opening address of the 5th Mental Health Week in 1982 included a note on prevention in Mental Health. Mental Health Education

as one of the Association's objectives is always the key to preventive work on primary, secondary and tertiary level. The eloquently written content on enuresis and mental wellness in Chinese constitutes the Association's early effort on Mental Health Promotion. We, however, are pleased to see the transformation of pioneer effort in public mental health education using scholarly essays to our recent use of social media as well as mobile Apps on mental health promotion in the emerging era of Big Data.

Last but not least, the critical thinking in appraisal of scientific paper and the clinical acumen in understanding the symptom of pain are expressions of excellence in great academic mind that obviously runs in family. The innovative yet pragmatic approach adopted in facing the challenges of developing mental health services with little effective treatment and scarce financial resources in the 60s is loud and clear among the pages of distilled insights, a fond memory of how our past generation of Hong Kong intellectuals endures adversities with diligence, perseverance and resilience.

Reference

LO W H and LO T, A ten-year follow-up study of Chinese Schizophrenics in Hong Kong. *Br J of Psych* 1977, 131, 63-66.