

## *60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium on Mental Health*



### **Welcoming Message**

**Dr. T L Lo**

Mental Health Association of Hong Kong has a fine tradition in pioneering public mental health education through organization of mental health week, mental health publications, PM Yap, Gerald Choa and TP Khoo Memorial Lectures over the past 60 years. More recently we add on community mental health literacy programme namely Mental Health First Aid Course as well as Defeat Depression Campaign. In the light of development of district-based Integrated Community Centre of Mental Wellness and the recent findings of Hong Kong Morbidity Study, the Association is in better touch with the social needs of common mental disorder like depression in the community.

The World Health Organization predicted in 2010 that depression would rank number two on the overall disease burden in the world by 2020. Hong Kong is no exception in the world map of depression. Prof. Dinesh Bhugra, President of World Psychiatric Association shared in the keynote address with the learned audience on ‘Depression as Disease Burden’, an update on a world view of this high prevalent condition hence kick start the MHAHK 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium on ‘Is Depression Preventable?’ held on 8-9<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at Charles K Kao Auditorium, Hong Kong Science Park, Shatin, Hong Kong.

Prof. Dinesh Bhugra further enlightened us on the topic of ‘Depression across culture’ in our PM Yap Memorial Lecture. Both being academic psychiatrists interested in culture and

mental health, Prof. PM Yap had renowned description of culture bound syndrome namely Koro and Prof. Bhugra is famous in his work in transcultural psychiatry, they are a perfect match to steer the audience into the first theme of the symposium; ‘Depression in Chinese communities’. ‘From a world perspective, the Chinese cultural system is unique, with a long and rich history. The Chinese also represent a considerable segment of the world’s population’. ‘There are some characteristics of traditional Chinese culture which are more or less shared by all Chinese groups, are less affected by social change, and have significant impact on Chinese behavior and mental health, to name a few, harmonies attitude towards nature, balance and conservation for optimal health, family as the basic resource for support, humanistic and interpersonal orientation, practical and dynamic adjustment in life situations’. [Chinese Societies and Mental Health 1995 P.3 – 18.] Prof. Linda Lam from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Dr. Chua Hong-choon from Institute of Mental Health in Singapore, Dr. He Yan-ling from Shanghai Mental Health Center, Shanghai and Dr. Liu Chia-yih of Chang Gung University School of Medicine, Taiwan join hands to map out the scene of Depression among major Chinese communities.

As a high prevalent condition, depression is common among at-risk groups. The organization of effective service network overseas to meet the health and social needs of depression would be shared by Ms. June Dent,

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Consultant Clinical Psychologist, and Clinical Lead on Psychological Therapies Pathway of Oxford Health in our Gerald Choa Memorial Lecture. Being a very successful Medical Administrator, Prof. Gerald Choa was a long serving President of MHAHK and surely would love to see new service network happen in addressing depression in the Hong Kong community. Being in at-risk groups vulnerable to depression, the older people, care givers of severe mentally ill, today's adolescents and post-natal women have all been targeted for intervention programme. Prof. Sally Chan, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Newcastle in Australia, Dr. Marcus Chiu, National University of Singapore, Prof. Paul Yip, Centre for Suicidal Research and Prevention, University of Hong Kong and Dr. Bonnie Siu, Castle Peak Hospital in Hong Kong share their successful experience in providing targeted intervention for these special groups respectively in Hong Kong and overseas alike.

'Is Depression Preventable?' is a question dear to the heart of mental health professionals as well as policy makers in health and welfare sectors. Prof. Michael Berk talked on prevention strategies as well as measures that are well tested out in Australia, a country in Asia Pacific region that invests heavily in mental health prevention in our TP Khoo Memorial Lecture. Mr. Khoo was a long serving Chairman and first Director of the MHAHK, an early advocate for mental health who had pioneering community services for

the mentally ill with entrepreneur spirits. We would proceed to explore preventive potentials of a range of local initiatives. Dr. Rainbow Ho and Prof. Zhang Zhang-jin, an expressive art therapist and Traditional Chinese Medicine academic at HKU touch on art therapies and acupuncture in Hong Kong. Prof. Patrick Lau of Hong Kong Baptist University and Prof. Daniel Wong of City University of Hong Kong share on the use of exercise as well as feasible preventive measures upon service inception of ICCMWs in Hong Kong respectively.

On behalf of the Association, we are honored by the presence of Mrs. Carrie Lam, GBS, JP, Chief Secretary for Administration of HKSAR in officiating the opening of this 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium. The Association is particularly grateful to the Government support in advancing community mental health care throughout the past years. Mrs. Carrie Lam surely has contributed a lot to the rehabilitation service development in mental health especially at a time when she was our beloved Director of Social Welfare. We anticipate synergy of different policy sectors to make Hong Kong a place mindful of depression. We are hopeful that community response to this high prevalent condition namely depression could be better aligned in our local setting.

### References

Tsing-Yi Lin, Wen-Shing Tseng, Ying-K'un Yeh  
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Oxford University 1995