

SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS (SA)

SA-1

ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKER'S IN WOMEN MENTAL HEALTH

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The global burden of psychiatric disorders in women is on the rise, especially in the perinatal period. Perinatal mental health is related to a woman's mental health condition during pregnancy/antenatal and the postpartum/neonatal care. In the Indian culture, several factors determine the mental health of women such as joint family system, patriarchy, marriage a must, preference for the male child, practice of dowry, lower educational status of women, strict code of conduct for females, and primary roles of women being childbearing and child-rearing. Across the life cycle of human, woman is the one who undergo a lot of potential events. Transition from girl to entering motherhood is a happiest moment to many women. During this time some of biological and psychosocial factors manifest the various risk and complications. Becoming pregnant, childbearing and parenting are the challenging task for the woman. Depression and anxiety are most common mental health issues during pregnancy and after given birth to baby. To prevent and promote the mental health of woman especially in period of perinatal the health care system plays an important role. Social worker has an emerging roles and responsibilities in this field. To work in perinatal mental health, social workers need specific training inputs and intervention. The role of social worker can make a vital difference in the individual, family and community level to provide optimal care and address complexities of mental health services. The presentation will highlights on the psychosocial issues in Women with perinatal mental health problems, role of Social Worker and training and assessment needs.

MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTIONS IN GENERAL HOSPITAL SETTING: ROLE OF MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS

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Medical social worker's role with children & adolescents: WHO framework suggests that 10 to 13% of children in the community suffer from significant mental health problems which required treatment and interventions from mental health professionals however there are 30% of children who have significant psychosocial problems such as violence in family, broken families, single parenting, bullying in school and community etc which puts them at risk for development of emotional and behavioural problems. These children are often referred to general hospital setting with somatic complaints such as aches and pains, skin infections, head ache, poor appetite and disturbed sleep etc. Children with no definite physical health concerns, can be referred to the medical social workers to assess the mental health and psychosocial problems of these children so that children can be provided with the appropriate psychosocial interventions such as parenting interventions, school related interventions etc. Medical social workers can also participate in socio-legal management of cases such as non-accidental head injuries, child sexual abuse, self harm and suicidal attempts by children and adolescents, teenage pregnancies etc. To work with children and adolescents, medical social workers require specific training inputs in assessments and interventions. In view of less no. of mental health professionals in country and stigma attached to visiting mental health institutions, medical social workers in general hospital setting can be considered as important manpower who will provide inputs on mental health concerns of children and adolescents from the community. The presentation will highlight the issues of children and adolescents visiting general hospital setting and role of medical social workers and their training needs.

ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKER IN WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH: ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTIONS

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The burden of common mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, somatoform disorders has been growing in communities owing to global challenges such as unemployment, financial crisis, breaking family systems, poor social support and breaking down of social systems. The disability due to these common mental health conditions, leads to larger economic, social and human rights concerns. On the other hand, the no. of mental health professionals required for interventions in the community is significantly low and is almost absent in some of the pockets of the country. Considering the gap between the no. of people suffering from mental health issues and the accessibility & availability of treatment, it is important to train the other allied professionals who will be able to address the common mental health conditions and provide interventions at the community level. Medical social workers with intensive training can reach out the people who require psychosocial interventions for common mental health conditions. The best practices have shown that most of the mental health issues can be addressed back in the communities with trained man power such as medical social workers, counsellors, school teachers, volunteers etc. World Health Organization's Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020, endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2013, recognizes the essential role of mental health in achieving health for all people. The plan includes 4 major objectives:

- more effective leadership and governance for mental health;
- the provision of comprehensive, integrated mental health and social care services in community-based settings;
- the implementation of strategies for promotion and prevention; and
- Strengthened information systems, evidence and research.

This presentation will highlight the role and importance of medical social workers in the community setting in addressing mental health issues and the strategies for medical social workers.