

P169: IMPROVING THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS IN NEPAL.

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Introduction: Average life expectancy in Nepal has been increasing annually (1991: 54 y/o, current: 72 y/o). The growth rate of the elderly population is faster than that of the total population in Nepal.

Objective: With only one Geriatric Psychiatrist in Nepal, Dr. Nidesh Sapkota, who received fellowship training at Saint Louis University (SLU), there is a need to develop a Geriatric Mental Health Program, similar to the model created in India by Dr. George Grossberg.

Working with the Patan Academy of Health Sciences School of Medicine (PAHSSM) in Nepal, the objective is to develop added mental health resources for the aging population by teaching and integrating evaluative materials from our Geriatric Psychiatry clinic at SLU.

Methods: We received funding from Graduate Medical Education to spend 1-month at the PAHSSM with Dr. Sapkota in May 2023. The goal is to learn about Psychogeriatric issues in Nepal by observing faculty and trainees working with geriatric patients and assessing the country's unmet needs for this population. The framework of the pre-existing program will be updated with current science in Psychogeriatrics with the support of the Nepalese government and WHO.

The methodology includes training healthcare providers to use screening tools, developing educational programs, and mental health and aging conferences with educators, researchers, and physicians from around the world, as well as establishing an exchange program for residents in Nepal and SLU for Geriatric Psychiatry training.

Results: Results of this pilot grant will be shared at future IPA meetings.

Conclusion: This experience will lead to opportunities to assess mental health disorders influenced by cultural and social differences. This can give us a better understanding of the lack of mental health needs and how we can close the gap, primarily for low-middle income aging populations across the globe.

Increased understanding of cultural differences impacting mental illness amongst other ethnic communities specifically how various forms of dementia are experienced, viewed and treated can lead to more appropriate interventions.

This project will help initiate a Global Geriatric Mental Health program at SLU that can draw attention to the disparities of the burden of mental illness across the globe by providing access to care within/between countries.