

Post press release and pictures: 4th Global Mental Health Summit



Mumbai, India: The Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), Mumbai hosted the 4th biannual Global Mental Health Summit (GMHS) between 28th and 29th November in collaboration with The Public Health Foundation of India, The Banyan and The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health (BALM) as a part of the Movement for Global Mental Health (MGMH). The MGMH was founded in 2008 to take forward the neglected agenda of mental health in the world, and has since been working to raise the profile of mental health through the global platform of an interactive website (www.globalmentalhealth.org) and the work of local activists in different countries.

The biannual summits, held in different parts of the world for the past 4 years have presented an opportunity for multiple stakeholders from the mental health sector to come together, share experiences and learn from one and other.

The focus of this year's two day Global Health Summit, themed "Nothing About Us, Without Us", was driven mainly by persons living with mental health issues and disabilities, from different social, cultural and educational ecosystems. The summit was kick started by Prof Asha Banu, TISS who introduced the summit to the audience and put forward the agenda of the summit. Dr Manish Jha, Dean, School of Social Work, TISS extended a hearty welcome to all participants. Prof Vikram Patel, co-director, Centre for Chronic Conditions and Injuries, and adjunct professor at Public Health Foundation of India, India, took the stand next and spoke about the right to care and right to dignity for users of mental health and the need for users, caregivers and mental health professionals to come together and dialogue about the changes needed in the care and services globally. Dr Vikram Gupta, director, BALM addressed the audience and spoke at length about the need to cut across the many barriers faced in the care for mental health users.

Day 1 of the summit saw participation from users, service providers and mental health professionals who shared their experiences not only through dialogue but also using interactive mediums of dance, theatre, poetry and more. The PHFI mental health team comprising of the EMERALD and SHARE teams showcased "*Mumtaz Mahal*", a short play highlighting the case study of a mental health patient that shows the defragmentation of mental health systems and lack of awareness and

empathy in the community. The day closed with the screening of the film *Astu*, which told the story of Mr Shastri, a retired Sanskrit professor who in due course suffers with Alzheimer's and goes missing. The second day of the summit started with a discussion on the film by veteran film and theatre actor Mohan Agashe and continued on to a panel discussion 'Nothing About Us, Without Us' moderated by Tasneem Raja and Ketki Ranade where users shared their experiences of living with mental health issues and Mental health policy group member Mr Akhileshwar Sahay spoke about the need to have a single voice regarding mental health in the country in order to exact policy change at the national level. The second day also saw posters being presented by various stakeholders elucidating the many achievements and challenges in the field of mental health.

During a session of academic presentations by mental health researchers and professionals the EMERALD India team members Ms Shalini Ahuja and Mr Sandesh Samudre delivered a presentation on "Service User centered mental health system strengthening: Experiences from EMERALD project" which highlighted the need to equip and facilitate involvement of service users and caregivers into mental health research and policy advocacy. EMERALD program is currently being implemented at the Sehore District, Madhya Pradesh and aims at generating evidence and capacity to enhance health system performance in delivering mental health care.

The day came to a close on a positive note with a short presentation by girls from The Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai who shared their experience of launching a school level peer-support group 'Reach Out' for students and adolescents dealing with stress, peer pressure, substance abuse, body image and more. It was followed by screening of the film 'Come with me'.

The Way Forward:

This summit brought together a large number of users and caregivers who had previously no opportunity to attend or share in a summit of this magnitude. All organizers and participants unanimously agreed that this is only a first step in creating inclusive spaces in the mental health sector, and more such events and networking opportunities need to be organized by different stakeholders. In his valedictory session, Dr S Parasuraman, director, TISS also suggested that many such events should be organized across different regions by multiple stakeholders, in which TISS will be happy to participate. He emphasized the need for documentation of best practices and partnerships between academia and field to expand the human resources for mental health.

The participants were delighted to see new faces talk about mental health which was suggestive of wider participation. All in all the two day summit was a huge success and a truly global initiative that cut across borders and brought various stakeholders together for a common cause and saw involvement from across sectors, with participation from organizations working in sectors such as

homelessness, trafficking, disability presented on mental health implications and relevance of mental health for their work.

On behalf of the MGMH: PHFI, The Banyan, The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health (BALM), & TISS

About the Movement for Global Mental Health

The Movement for Global Mental Health is a network of individuals and organisations that aim to improve services for *people living with mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities worldwide*, especially in low- and middle-income countries where effective services are often scarce. Two principles are fundamental to the Movement: scientific evidence and human rights.

The history of the Movement began in 2007 with a Call for Action published in the first Lancet series on global mental health. Through volunteerism and collaboration, the Movement has gradually grown to a stage where members are able to share ideas, initiate activities and seek resources, often in partnership with other members.

The Movement has grown to a membership of around 200 institutions and 10,000 individuals, many of who are actively involved. Members of the Movement include individuals and families affected by mental health problems, health care providers, activists, decision makers and researchers worldwide. For the most recent membership figures, click here

The Movement offers multiple benefits to both individuals and organisations that join its thousands of members, including possibilities for networking, knowledge sharing, joining national and international campaigning, news updates and participation in a bi-annual summit. By joining and being active in global mental health, you can contribute importantly to achieving the Movement's aims.

The organisation of the Movement is the joint responsibility of the Secretariat based in The Public Health Foundation of India, and the international Advisory Group, who act in accordance with the Movement's Charter.

<http://www.globalmentalhealth.org/>

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