

Symposium | Community care : [Symposium 62] Community mental health care: perspectives in Canada, Korea, and Japan inspired by a cultural -ecosocial view.

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[Symposium 62] Community mental health care: perspectives in Canada, Korea, and Japan inspired by a cultural -ecosocial view.

Moderator: Masayuki Noguchi (Okayama Prefectural Mental Health & Welfare Center)

[SY-62-03] Evolving Roles of Psychiatric Care Providers in Community Mental Health: Collaborative Outreach for People with Unmet Mental Health Needs in Japan

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In Japan, psychiatric care providers have traditionally focused on inpatient treatment. However, recent developments show a shift toward community-based engagement, especially through collaboration with public agencies to support individuals with unmet mental health needs (UMHNs)—those disconnected from care and facing complex life challenges.

In several municipalities, psychiatric care providers now work alongside public health centers and local government staff to conduct outreach and care coordination for people with UMHNs. These initiatives, often commissioned by local authorities, involve multidisciplinary teams engaging directly with individuals who might otherwise fall through the cracks of the mental health system.

This shift has been supported by national policy changes. Revisions to the health insurance fee schedule have introduced reimbursement for case management, multidisciplinary collaboration, and inter-agency coordination. Additionally, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has issued a national guideline on post-discharge support, encouraging continuity of care through stronger partnerships between psychiatric care providers and community services.

Together, these developments reflect a broader movement toward integrating psychiatric services into local ecosystems in collaborative and non-hierarchical ways. Still, this expansion must be approached with care to avoid the risk of over-medicalization. Psychiatric care providers should act not as dominant actors, but as partners within broader support networks involving welfare, housing, and other sectors.

This presentation will highlight emerging practices in which psychiatric care providers contribute to community-based outreach and support for UMHNs, discussing both the policy context and practical challenges in building inclusive mental health care systems.