

Symposium | Global Mental Health : [Symposium 69] Global Mental Health in a Polarized World: Building Bridges, Sharing Solutions.

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[Symposium 69] Global Mental Health in a Polarized World: Building Bridges, Sharing Solutions.

Moderator: Itsuo Asai (Heart Clinic Medical Corporation)

[SY-69-02] Cultural Psychiatry & Global Mental Health: Bridging Perspectives for Inclusive Care

*Kenneth Po-Lun Fung¹ (1. University of Toronto (Canada))

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Mental disorders remain among the top ten leading causes of disease burden worldwide, with little reduction since 1990. A significant treatment gap persists between the prevalence of mental disorders and the proportion of individuals receiving care, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The field of global mental health has emerged to address these disparities. However, from a cultural psychiatry perspective, there are critical concerns regarding the dominance of Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) populations in shaping mental health research, diagnostic criteria, and treatment models. Without careful consideration, there is a risk of exporting culturally specific concepts and interventions that may not align with diverse sociocultural contexts.

To address these challenges, global mental health has increasingly integrated strategies such as task-shifting/sharing, cultural adaptation, and implementation science. There is also growing recognition of the role of social determinants of health, the continuum between mental health and illness, consideration of the care gap, and the importance of cultural safety and cultural competence in service delivery. Furthermore, the field acknowledges the need for bidirectional learning—recognizing that high-income countries (HICs) have much to learn from LMICs, especially in resource-limited settings, and that marginalized populations within HICs face similar structural barriers to care.

In addition, global challenges—including war, pandemics, climate change, and the rise of nationalism and populism—continue to shape the trajectory of global mental health. This presentation will explore how cultural psychiatry can deepen the understanding of global mental health and inform its evolution. It will also highlight why cultural psychiatry and cultural psychiatrists need to actively engage with global mental health to foster equitable, contextually relevant mental health care worldwide.

Learning Objectives: 1. **Reflect on the interplay between cultural psychiatry and global mental health** by examining how Western-based mental health frameworks influence diagnosis, treatment, and research, and identifying strategies to promote culturally informed care. 2. **Discuss approaches to reducing the global mental health treatment gap** through interventions such as task-shifting, cultural adaptation,

and implementation science while considering their ethical and cultural implications. 3.

Discuss the impact of global challenges on mental health (e.g., war, pandemics, climate change, nationalism) and explore how cultural psychiatry can contribute to developing resilient, inclusive mental health responses across diverse settings.