



ORAL PRESENTATION

Psychiatry trainees' experiences of providing training in the WHO's mhGAP manual in Kashmir, India

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Abstract

Introduction: Global mental health is an increasingly important component of training and is being integrated in to all specialty curricula in the UK.

Objectives: The Royal College of Psychiatrists Volunteer scheme allows psychiatrists, including trainees, to participate in volunteering opportunities abroad. This report outlines the experiences of psychiatry trainees who travelled to Kashmir in India to provide training in the World Health Organisation's (WHO) mhGAP tool and reflects on volunteering as a mechanism for obtaining global health competencies.

Methods: The Kashmir project has run for two years, with the support of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Volunteer Scheme. Psychiatrists from the UK travelled to Kashmir to deliver training in the use of the WHO mhGAP tool, which has been specifically designed to support primary care workers to identify and treat common mental health problems in resource limited settings. Health professionals from across Kashmir and beyond were invited to attend the training, focusing on the pilot region of Gandabal. Trainees attended a two-day 'train the trainer' course in the UK to prepare them to use the mhGAP and were supported throughout the volunteering experience by consultant psychiatrists.

Results: Participation in the volunteering project in Kashmir provided trainees with real world experience of many of the key issues in global mental health, such as the influence of cultural factors, stigmatisation of mental illness and the varying resources and structure of health systems to respond to mental health needs. Trainees were also able to develop a number of generic competencies of relevance to their practice back in the UK. This included educational skills and the completion of work place based assessments.

Discussion: Global mental health is increasingly prominent on the training agenda, especially in countries with high numbers and diversity of immigrants, such as the UK. Volunteering schemes offer a mechanism whereby psychiatry trainees can gain hands-on experience of delivering training in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC).

Conclusions: As well as the opportunity to use skills to improve mental healthcare in LMIC, volunteering can enable psychiatric trainees to gain specific competencies in global mental health.

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