What is Global mental health?

Samuel Okpaku


Abstract

Global health and global mental health are shifts in paradigm that are in response to the globalization process. Meanwhile, there is a shift in the definition and portfolio of health to include for example human rights and climate change. Many rich nations are beginning to include health policies within their foreign policies. Many stakeholders share the international vision of equity to all. We are in this together.

This presentation will give a history of global mental health. It will present a definition of global mental health along 5 criteria. This definition as will be useful for research and scholarship. The presentation will highlight what some of the rich countries are contributing to global health, and what more they can do. It will also highlight the reciprocal benefits not only in terms of cultural and friendship benefits, but also potential education, research, and training benefits. It will define global mental health as the range of activities concerned with health that meets five principal criteria: universal and trans universal criterion; public health criterion; stakeholder’s criterion; problem ownership criterion; and team criterion. This definition distinguishes it from community mental health and it allows for us likely to facilitate scholarship and research.

Global mental health like the overarching process of globalization is not without any criticism. There is a vocal group that challenges the westernization and over medicalization of mental health. The role of such group as a watch dog will also be presented.