

AUTUMN 2007

CONFERENCES

Swansea 20th April 2007

The Dylan Thomas Centre once again hosted the Spring Welsh Psychiatric Society meeting, Mental Illness & Primary Care. For the third year running, the Mediterranean style sunshine and heat convinced me that it never rains in Swansea.

The delegate list of over 90 was properly multi-disciplinary with representatives from nursing, occupational therapy, research, and all grades of doctor psychiatric and non-psychiatric. Dr. Mike Shooter, Vice President and past president The Royal College of Psychiatrists welcomed delegates to the meeting and he was delighted that the audience represented every aspect of mental health.

The first speaker was Dr. David Kessler, Senior Research Fellow, Bristol University, on “The internet & CBT”. Dr Kessler told us about the growth of effective internet CBT packages and his involvement in a trial of their effectiveness. Dr. Huw Lloyd, GP, Colwyn Bay, followed on “The Welsh declaration for Mental Health & Well-being”. Dr. Lloyd asserted his credentials for addressing a psychiatric gathering, having been brought up in Denbigh Hospital when his father was on the staff. He went on to proselytise for the Wales Mental Health in Primary Care Group whose commendable aim is to set “Gold Standards for Primary Care Mental Health in Wales”. He urged us to sign the Welsh Declaration for Mental Health & Well-being, stating that Wales has eight out of the ten poorest and most deprived health areas in the UK, also some of the poorest health in Europe and that the connection between poor physical health and poor mental health cannot be ignored.

Professor Helen Lester, Professor of Primary Care, Manchester University, then presented “The role of primary care for people with serious mental illness – past, present & future”. She began by saying how she had enjoyed her training in psychiatry in Cardiff as part of her GP training. She emphasised the negative role of stigma in managing the seriously mentally ill and how their psychiatric diagnosis overshadows their other care requirements to their detriment.

Dr. Peter Bower, Senior Research Fellow, Manchester University, rounded off the morning’s talks with “Collaborative care for depression in primary care”, considering the optimal relationship between primary and secondary care and giving us a glimpse into telephone treatment for depression.

This time the afternoon format changed with poster presentations laid out for perusal and judging. This innovation was popular; over 20 posters were presented and judged under the categories, “Research Findings” and “New Research Ideas”. Dr Ian Collings of Swansea with “Perceived training needs in adult attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder: a pilot study of general psychiatrists” was awarded first place in the Research finding category. The following were highly commended: Mr. Phil Jones, Research Fellow, Swansea University – “Headline rate of suicide: not simply the sum of its parts”: Dr. Adil Kadri, Swansea NHS Trust – “Natural killer cell activity in elderly bereaved individuals: a pilot study”

In the new Research Idea category, first place went to Ms. Faye Griffith-Noble, Senior Research Assistant, Swansea University, for “Lifestyle interventions to improve the physical health of people with severe mental illness: barriers to uptake”. Dr. Shetty, Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust with co-author Dr. Bhat of Merseyside were highly commended for “Threatened suicide – a psychiatric trainee’s impasse”.

Tea in Morgan’s hotel attracted 19 members to the WPS general meeting, one of the more important discussion points being that our next conference will be a joint one with our Breton colleagues in St Malo, 29 and 30 November 2007. The meeting also welcomed the idea of a WPS pin-badge.

St Malo - 28th and 29th November 2007 Inter-Celtic Conference

This is a joint venture between La Société de Neuro-Psychiatrie de l’Ouest and the WPS and we are very grateful to Bruno Millet, Professor of Psychiatry at Rennes and President of La Société de Neuro-Psychiatrie de l’Ouest and Professor Keith Lloyd our Conference Organiser for planning and organising this ambitious international meeting. Psychiatric epidemiology and psychopharmacology across the Channel is the theme of the meeting. There are eminent speakers and a wide range of contributions and workshops giving the programme a broad appeal across the range of psychiatric specialities.

The academic and scientific programme is impressive and we want this to be underpinned with an enjoyable and successful social programme. In June the first programme announcement was circulated and in August members will have received the registration form and group travel arrangements.

The complete travel package is very attractive, leaving on Wednesday 28th November and returning on Sunday 2 December. It includes:

- Return travel in 49-seater coach fitted with reclining seats, on board entertainment system, toilet, tea and coffee making facilities etc
- 2 nights bed and breakfast accommodation at the *** Hotel Escale Oceania (£50 single room supplement)
- Return ferry crossing between Portsmouth and St Malo including 2-berth cabin each way
- Insurance

The price per person for a fully paid member and guest is £185 each. This is a subsidised rate for members and their guests. The normal package price is £345 per person. This is an excellent offer and already there is considerable interest. Think about coming, it will remind you also of the real pleasures of travelling by sea. No endless queuing for check in, just the unhurried embarkation from coach to ship. Once on board Brittany Ferries the next vital step is to reserve a table for a splendid Gallic treat. After a leisurely meal to bed and then waking up on the other side of the Channel. The last trip to La Rochelle was really enjoyable.

Naturally if you have any queries Alison Lewis on 01792 602355 will be very happy to deal with them or at a.lewis@swansea.ac.uk

Swansea - Friday 25th April 2008

This will be a joint meeting between the WPS and the Welsh Division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. It will be devoted to: Targeting treatments more effectively across the lifespan and will be held at the Dylan Thomas Centre Swansea. Further details in due course.

MISCELLANY

Edward Elgar: Links with Wales and Psychiatry

Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934) is the most famous English composer and his Pomp and Circumstance Marches, Enigma Variations and Land of Hope and Glory are universally recognised. 2007 is the 150th anniversary of his birth and there are various events to celebrate this.

Elgar had considerable links with Wales. He was interested in the Welsh language, he stayed at Gregynnog with the Misses Gwendoline and Margaret Davies and he holidayed at Llangrannog on the Cardigan coast. He was born in Malvern not far from British Camp an Iron Age hill fort, which may have been the last stronghold of the British chieftain Caractacus or Caradog. He was a great leader who resisted the Roman invasion in the 1st century AD. Alas he was eventually betrayed and captured. The Romans took him to Rome where he lived out his life. This was highly unusual, as the Roman army took no prisoners. This story inspired Elgar to compose the cantata Caractacus in 1898, which was dedicated to Queen Victoria.

A lesser-known fact is his link with psychiatry. In an early example of music therapy he was appointed bandmaster of the Worcester Lunatic Asylum, Powick. His salary in 1879 was £32 per annum and five shillings for every polka or quadrille he composed. Later, he used to delight in surprising sycophantic hangers-on with the words: ‘When I was at the lunatic asylum....’

A new Welsh link with France

As the Society’s links with Brittany are being renewed and consolidated it is a pleasure to learn of a new connection between the two countries. After Nicolas Sarkozy became the new French President in May he appointed Francois Fillon as his Prime Minister.

This gave great pleasure to many people in Wales and to people in north Gwent in particular as Madame Fillon is from Abergavenny. Penny is 51 and the mother of five children. She was born and brought up in Abergavenny where she attended the local grammar school. The couple met when she was a law student and Francois was a parliamentary attaché at the French Ministry of Defence.

Penny is a great hit in political circles and among the locals in the Le Mans region, west of Paris, which her husband represents in France’s Senate and where the couple live in a 12th century chateau.

BOOK REVIEW

I want a Christian Psychiatrist

Dr David Enoch

Oxford: Monarch Books. 2006 192pp £7.99

The title conveys that this book is only for the Christian who is grappling with mental problems. This is not so as a much wider readership would benefit greatly from reading it. It is written in a clear lucid style using contemporary terms and there is no element of dumbing down for the lay reader.

Roughly the book divides into three parts. The first part is an excellent patient guide to mental illness and its treatment – defining terms and explaining modern terminology. This part reminded me of Frank Fish's excellent book *Clinical Psychiatry for the Layman*.

The middle section looks at depression and treatment in detail and the special needs and problems of devout Christians. In an increasingly secular world where there is less respect for religious views health professionals need to be reminded of the importance of the spiritual world. For some of our patients complete recovery cannot occur before this aspect of their life is addressed. In clinical practice it is sometimes difficult to distinguish religious guilt from a depressive symptom. Mystical and religious experiences can also pose difficult diagnostic problems. This book is an introduction to these issues.

The final part examines the parallels between religion and psychiatry. There is extensive overlap but this is hidden partly because of secular prejudice or because of the use of a completely different vocabulary. For good pastoral care qualities of compassion, acceptance and sincerity are necessary, the very same qualities that facilitate good psychotherapy but are known as empathy, warmth and genuineness. The final part also explores how the church needs to become a more real therapeutic community and that its fellowship would be enhanced if its senior members received training along psychotherapeutic lines.

This is a reader friendly book, which serves an important function, and a wide range of people would benefit from it. Although we live in a secular society there are many people who are conscious of a great void in their lives and are exploring how this can be filled. This book provides one clear answer – through God and Jesus Christ. In addition it makes a good case that if the patient and the therapist share the same religious beliefs there are many advantages.

The author is an eminent psychiatrist. After a long and distinguished career mainly in Liverpool, he came to Cardiff. He is an established author writing both for the profession and for the lay public. His book *Uncommon Psychiatric Syndromes* is a classic and is now in its 4th edition. David Enoch is a devout and high profile Christian. Currently he is President of the Evangelical Society and his book *Healing the Hurt Mind* is now in its 11th edition.

RESIGNATIONS

Dr Myrddin Evans

Dr Mary Lawrence

Dr Sidney Nam

Dr Jacky Short – emigrated to New Zealand

Professor David Taylor

DEATH

Dr John Aled Williams, Colwyn Bay, died 14th May 2007. He was a very faithful member of the Society, an obituary will appear in the next newsletter