

MEDIA RELEASE

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FURTHERING RESEARCH IN DEPRESSION AND PSYCHOSIS FRONTIERS IN MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM 2018

1. Leading researchers, neuroscientists, clinicians and academics with a keen interest in research will converge at the second **Frontiers in Mental Health Symposium (FMHS) 2018**. Jointly organised by the **Institute of Mental Health (IMH)** and **Nanyang Technological University's (NTU Singapore) medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine)**, FMHS 2018 will be held on Tuesday, 6 March at the IMH Lecture Hall.
2. Themed "Advancing Research in Depression and Psychosis", FMHS 2018 seeks to create a lively platform for updates and discussions on recent research on depression and psychosis, and the biological causes for these conditions. Depression is a common mental disorder which affects more than 300 million people worldwide. This debilitating mental condition has been listed by the World Health Organisation as the leading cause of disability which contributes to the overall global burden of disease. As for psychosis, three per cent of the general population worldwide is affected by this psychiatric condition that commonly occurs in young adults.
3. Sir Philip Campbell, Editor-in-Chief of Nature and the Nature Publishing Group and Chair, Board of Trustees of the mental health research-funding charity MQ: Transforming Mental Health, will be our keynote speaker. He will discuss the "Impact of mental health research and how it relates to research fund-raising". Overseas speakers from Sweden's Karolinska University Hospital, National Centre for Mental Health (South Korea), National Centre of Neurology and Psychiatry (Japan), as well as speakers from IMH and LKCMedicine will also share recent findings from mental health research and discuss the implications of those studies on the practice of mental healthcare.
4. The speakers will share their expertise on topics such as the epidemiology of depression in Singapore; defining depression and its implications; harnessing the brain's naturally produced neuroactive steroids for the treatment of anxiety and depression; molecular imaging in psychiatric disorders; early intervention into cognitive disturbances of psychosis as well as treatment outcomes in Schizophrenia.
5. This is the second time that IMH and LKCMedicine are co-organising this symposium, the first being in 2016.
6. **Prof Chong Siow Ann, Vice Chairman, Medical Board (Research) at the Institute of Mental Health** said, "We are honoured to have renowned mental health researchers from several countries coming together to focus on two of the most common mental conditions – depression and psychosis. This event provides an excellent platform for the delegates to network, learn and

explore potential collaborations in mental health research to better understand the mechanisms of these disorders which will pave the way for better and safer treatment.”

7. **Prof James Best, Dean of NTU’s Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine**, also said, “Mental health is fundamental to our well-being, but without obvious outward signs it has long been overlooked in our efforts to improve lives through research. Take depression, which affects six out of every 100 people over a lifetime in Singapore. Despite its prevalence, we still face many unanswered questions about what causes the disease. We are determined to shed light on the intricate brain processes involved to offer new diagnostics and better tolerated therapeutic approaches to depression and other mental health conditions to improve the quality of life for patients in Singapore and beyond.”
8. While research into chronic medical conditions such as cancer has progressed through the years, the understanding of the key causes of mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia has fallen behind. Mental health research is critical because uncovering some of the key risks factors for mental illnesses and the causes of these conditions can help improve treatment and enhance outcomes and quality of life for persons with mental health issues and their caregivers.

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About Institute of Mental Health (IMH)

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH), a member of the National Healthcare Group, is the only tertiary psychiatric care institution in Singapore. Located on the sprawling 23-hectare campus of Buangkok Green Medical Park in the north-eastern part of Singapore, IMH offers a multidisciplinary and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and therapy services in hospital-based and community-based settings. The 2010-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (aged below 19 years), adults and the elderly. Besides providing clinical services, IMH also leads in mental health research and training the next generation of mental health professionals in Singapore. For more information, please visit www.imh.com.sg.

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About Depression

It is common for one to feel depressed at times due to negative situations and events. The feelings usually last for a while before the person resumes normal activities. Depression is a profound feeling of sadness, emptiness, worthlessness and hopelessness. When such feelings are prolonged and affect a person's daily function and relationships with those around, it is pertinent to seek medical help.

Signs and Symptoms

- Persistent feeling of sadness
- Loss of interest in activities and loss of pleasure in almost all activities
- Sleep disturbances (either sleeping too much or not being able to sleep)
- Loss of appetite with consequent loss of weight
- Difficulty concentrating, loss of energy, constant feeling of lethargy and hopelessness
- Have suicidal thoughts or intentions which might lead to suicidal attempts or even actual suicide.

About Psychosis

Psychosis is a condition where the person loses touch with reality and may experience delusions and hallucinations. The onset is usually in late teens or early twenties. Schizophrenia is the most severe of all the psychotic disorders.

Signs and Symptoms

- Hallucinations ie hearing voices, experiencing smells or tastes and seeing people that do not exist
- Feelings of persecution
- Bizarre or disorganised behaviour, talking to self
- Social withdrawal
- Emotional blunting (i.e. not displaying any emotion whether positive or negative)
- Lack of motivation and drive