

MEDIA RELEASE

IMH' S REGIONAL ELDERCARE AGENCIES PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM -REAP) HELPS DETECT AND MANAGE PSYCHOGERIATRIC PROBLEMS IN THE COMMUNITY

- *Early detection and management of psychogeriatric problems*
- *Enhanced training and support of community partners to ensure continuity of care*

6th Oct 08 – Singapore As a testimony to the success of bringing psychogeriatric services to the community, the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) will further expand its programme through the launch of a Regional Eldercare Agencies Partnership Program (REAP).

Effective Psychogeriatric Services for the Elderly in the Community

In Jan 2006, the first IMH psycho-geriatric services for frail elderly called APCATS (Aged Psychiatry Community Assessment and Treatment Service) was piloted for those who are unable to access standard clinic-based services. So far, the clinical utility and effectiveness of the service have rendered heartening data. When comparing the data pre and post implementation in 2006 and 2007, the total number of hospitalization episodes was reduced from 57 to 9 for the new cases under study. The total length of stay (LOS) of hospitalization was reduced from 2565 to 271 days.

Since the launch of the clinical service from Feb 2006 to Aug 08, there have been over 1005 home visits. Over 50% of the cases are dementia related with 20% related

to depressive disorders and another 20% covering other psychotic disorders. In a study with over 103 cases that were followed up for 6 months or more, At 6 months, 65.6%, 81.3%, 81.3% had at least 20% improvement in the MADRS, NPI and NPI-CDS respectively. 75.3% were rated to have improved on the CGI-C. (*MADRS- scale for depression; NPI-scale for psy and behavioral problems in dementia; NPI-CDS-scale for carer distress in dementia, CGI-C: clinical global impression of change*)

The APCATS multidisciplinary team comprises medical officer, psychiatric nurses, medical social worker, and occupational therapists, and psychologist under the supervision of a consultant psychiatrist from the Department of Geriatric Psychiatry. Clinical case management model is used to co-ordinate patient care. Depending on their condition, patients are reviewed at intervals ranging from 2 weeks to 8 wks. In between the visits phone calls are made to assess the patients' conditions. There is close contact between the team and the caregivers. In addition to medications, the occupational therapist uses cognitive rehabilitation techniques for those with dementia. For elderly suffering from depression and anxiety, cognitive behaviour therapy, in addition to supportive counseling are used when appropriate. The case manager will also liaise with other service providers when necessary.

APCATS will provide its services for the central CDC partners while the Eastern and Western regions of Singapore will be served by other service providers under the Area-based Community Psycho-geriatric Framework of the National Mental Health Blueprint.

Building capacity

Such community based psychiatric assessment and treatment has spurred IMH to innovate and further build capabilities to reach out to the community. In conjunction with IMH's 80th Anniversary celebrations and as part of the National Mental Health Blueprint, REAP was launched in April 08 and 12 eldercare agencies and GPs will be trained to improve the provision and co-ordination of mental health services for the elderly in the community.

"The training aims to strengthen their capability in early detection, management and coordination of care of psycho-geriatric problems in the community" said Dr Joshua Kua, Project Director, Aged Psychiatry Community Assessment & Treatment Service (APCATS), IMH. To date 285 participants (comprising both staff and volunteers) from the eldercare agencies have been trained. Approximately 420 grassroot leaders

will be trained from Nov 08 to 2009. With this training, plans are underway for 100 elderly clients to be screened this year and approximately 500-1000 clients to be screened in 2009. Upon screening, clients with suspected dementia or depression would then be referred to the APCATS team who will implement an assessment and triage algorithm to ascertain the diagnosis and to advise the eldercare agencies on further management.

“We are celebrating our 80th anniversary this year and engagement of community partners allow our hospital to not only boost the speed and quality of its services but also deliver care to the community’s doorstep. This is in line with our vision to be the leading mental health centre in Asia,” explained Mr Leong Yew Meng, CEO IMH.

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