Global recession and mental health: Psychiatric illness, Violence and Substance Abuse in Populations under Stress: Taiwan 2011

Glynn Harrison, President

The Global recession continues to dominate popular media, and there is talk of a possible ‘double dip’ recession. As I write, governments are wrestling with the delicate judgment call about when to start cutting the huge deficits that have built up over recent years. And for many, the pain from future cuts and savings has yet to be felt - huge injections of government cash aimed at averting prolonged depression have, for many, created something of a phoney war.

So it is early days to evaluate the impact of global recession on mental health. Yet our 13th International Congress will be close enough to press home the importance and potential scale of the issues for mental health but also distant enough to allow us to stand back and begin to find answers to the questions. Whilst the recession continues to inflict real pain on communities around the world, it presents a unique opportunity for epidemiologists to explore the associations between adversity and mental health.

But we need to be imaginative. Are all the effects of the recession necessarily negative? For some there will be new (albeit painful) opportunities to think life differently; to build resilience and review our values. And we can learn a great deal from what happened in previous global economic crises of the 20th century - the Great Depression of the 1930’s in the USA or the social and economic adversities of the post-communist era in Eastern Bloc countries. How many people know, for example, that all-cause mortality actually went down after the American Great Depression? But what happened to suicide rates...?

We already have lined up an outstanding list of contributors to our Congress. Researchers will present their findings from recent adversities - suicide bombing, unemployment, natural disasters such as the Asian Tsunami - as well as presenting intriguing analyses of health outcomes in previous crises. And we shall explore the terrible toll from modern slaveries such as people trafficking and drug trafficking. As well as focusing on new findings, we will explore new methodologies and try to address the conceptual issues related to interpreting our data.

So come to Taiwan and show us your data too. We are especially keen to have original research related to our major theme. However, as always, a substantial part of the Congress will
be devoted to general topics in psychiatric epidemiology, health care provision and cross-cultural issues in mental health. The web-site is now open for submission of Abstracts. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Professor Mian Yoon Chong and Professor Andrew Cheng, and their teams, for their superb efforts in working to make this Congress another major success.

I look forward to welcoming you to Taiwan,

Glynn Harrison
President IFPE

The XIII international congress of IFPE: 30 MARCH – 2 APRIL, 2011, KAOSHING, TAIWAN

Dear Colleagues,

The XIII International congress of IFPE is to be held in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, from 30 March to 2 April 2011. It is the best season to visit Kaohsiung, with pleasant weather and lots of surprises. Kaohsiung was the host of 2009 World Games. The congress will be held at the 85 SKYTOWER, an icon of Kaohsiung, where the building design was inspired by the Chinese character “Kao” (meaning "tall") and also the first character in the city’s name. Our welcome dinner will be served in this tower with exquisite food and a beautiful view of the harbour and the city. I welcome you to Kaohsiung and looking forward for your participation.

Mian-Yoon Chong
Chairman, Local Organization Committee

The main theme for the upcoming conference is “Mental Health and Global Recession: Psychiatric Illness, Violence and Substance Abuse in Populations under Stress”. This theme is timely, as we are witnessing a global economic downturn, with far-reaching implications both for nations and individuals. We have not yet seen the full-blown consequences of this economic crisis for mental health in the general population, but we can expect increases in common mental disorders, increased suicide rates, more violence, more conflicts and more general unease.

Confirmed contributors:
- Kerstin Bergh-Johannesson
- Andrew T. A. Cheng
- Sandro Galea
- Susan S. F. Gau
- David Gunnell
- Harvey Minas
- Christina M. Hultman
- Murad M. Khan
- Francis J. McMahon
- Kathleen R. Merikangas
- R. Srinivasa Murthy
- George C. Patton
- Martin J. Prince
- David Stuckler
- Antti Uutela
- Harvey Whiteford

The deadline for submission of abstracts (including oral and poster presentations) is September 30, 2010.
Member Profile: Kristy Sanderson, Senior Research Fellow, Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania

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I am an Australian psychiatric epidemiologist who is currently working as a Senior Research Fellow at the Menzies Research Institute, in Hobart, Tasmania. I work with a diverse group of epidemiologists and biostatisticians in Hobart, but only a few of us have a dedication to mental health research. Following an undergraduate degree in psychology, I started my career in the research unit of the (in)famous Professor Gavin Andrews at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Sydney. My eyes were opened to the possibilities of a population health approach to mental health, and I gradually specialised in psychiatric epidemiology. I attended my first IFPE conference in 2007 and look forward to 2011 in Kaohsiung.

My current research focuses on quantifying and reducing the individual and economic burden of mental disorders and related chronic diseases, with a particular interest in work and health. This area of research fascinates me as it is inherently cross-disciplinary and broad in scope. I have collaborations with colleagues working in chronic disease epidemiology, occupational epidemiology, health economics, clinical psychology, management studies, and clinical medicine. I was recently awarded an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship (2009-13) to further my research in this field.

My research is structured across four themes, designed to investigate how to reduce the high economic toll of depression in the workforce from different angles:

2. Risk factors: Disease risk from working environments and lifestyle using data from cohort studies and trials.
3. Interventions: With clinical colleagues, develop and trial public health interventions in different community settings (e.g. mental health promotion in small-medium businesses; health promotion and job stress reduction across the whole public service in Tasmania of 30,000+ employees; depression treatment following a myocardial infarction and impact on work outcomes).
4. Economic impact: Improve methods for quantifying economic burden in the workforce by gaining a greater understanding of how managers think about depression and lost productivity in their workforce, and what evidence they need to convince them to invest in mental health promotion.

Brief report from the 15th EPA Section Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry symposium in Bergen, June 16-19, 2010

The IFPE conference is bi-annual, as is also the EPA Section Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry symposium (next in 2012, the Netherlands). This year’s EPA section meeting was in Bergen, Norway, and was well attended with 36 parallel oral sessions, six poster session and 16 plenary speakers.

Among highlights were Professor Robin Murray on Schizophrenia, Professor Martin Prince on Global Mental Health, Professor Dinesh Bhugra on Cultural Psychiatry, and Professor Sir David Goldberg in debate with Professor Ulrik Malt on splitting versus lumping of diagnoses in DSM-IV.

The topic of the conference was consequences of mental disorders, with a particular focus on increased mortality and work related disability in common mental disorder.

The organizing committee for this years’ EPA section symposium was Ms Ann Kristin Knudsen (Bergen), Mr Jens Christoffer Skogen (Bergen), Professor Emeritus Anthony Mann (IoP London), and Professor Arnstein Myklebust (Bergen, Norway).

Organizing committee: Professor Arnstein Myklebust, Ms Ann Kristin Knudsen, Professor Emeritus Anthony Mann, and Mr. Jens Christoffer Skogen.

The EPA section and IFPE have shared mailing lists for distribution of information on upcoming events. Members of the EPA section will continue the tradition of participating also on IFPE conferences.

For details on presentations, pictures and abstracts, please visit: http://www.epidemiology2010bergen.org/
Calendar of Events

Marrakech, Morocco
October 23-27, 2010

The World Association for Social Psychiatry XX World Congress, Integrating Health and Mental Health Initiatives.

Kaohsiung, Taiwan
March 30 – April 2, 2011

International Federation of Psychiatric Epidemiology 2011: Mental Health and Global Recession: Psychiatric Illness, Violence and Substance Abuse in Populations under Stress, the 13th International Congress of IFPE

Amsterdam, Netherlands
November 10-13, 2010

European Public Health Association, the 3rd joint European Conference on Public Health
Website: http://www.eupha.org/site/upcoming_conference

Maastricht, Netherlands
2012

European Psychiatric Association: Consequences of Mental Health: 16th EPA Symposium Section for Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry

Buenos Aires, Argentina
September 18-22, 2011

World Psychiatric Association, World Psychiatry 2011: Our Heritage and Our Future, the 15th World Congress of Psychiatry