

Mental Health 2024

Dr Chiang Shu Hui Grace

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Mental health is a major public health concern in Singapore. About 12 percent of Singaporeans are affected by mental disorders in their lifetime,¹ leading to an estimated annual loss of 84-162 quality-adjusted life-years (QALYs) per 100,000 people.² This has detrimental social and economic impacts.^{2,3} To mitigate this significant public health problem, Singapore has instituted mental health promotion and education programmes across different sectors. The outreach efforts target schools, workplaces, and the general community. Efforts have also been made to achieve affordable and accessible clinical care through programmes such as the Mental Health-General Practitioner Partnership and Chronic Disease Management Programme Medisave.

This issue of the *Singapore Family Physician* highlights common mental health disorders and what family physicians can do to improve the recovery and well-being of patients experiencing such conditions.

In Unit 1, Dr Kwek Thiam Soo gives a comprehensive review on the assessment and management of anxiety disorders in general practice. He sheds light on the important role family physicians can play in the early diagnosis and management of anxiety disorders.

In Unit 2, Dr Tina Tan provides a timely update on the assessment and management of depression. She highlights when further referrals are appropriate and whom these referrals should be addressed to such as psychiatrists or allied health professionals.

In Unit 3, Dr Ong Kian Chung provides a practical paradigm for doctors when broaching the topic of smoking cessation with patients. He also discusses alternatives to cigarettes.

In Unit 4, Dr Alvin Lum and Mr Kelvin Tung write about the continuity of care for community-dwelling schizophrenia patients. They highlight the integral partnership that family physicians can have with patients living with schizophrenia in optimising care and improving quality of life.

In Unit 5, Asst Prof Rajeev Ramachandran and Assoc Prof John Wong discuss the physical and psychiatric perspectives of eating disorders in adolescents. They highlight the important role family physicians can play in improving the prognosis of patients with eating disorders when care is shared with specialist services.

In Unit 6, Drs Dennis Seow and Philip Yap write about the essential role general practitioners play in supporting caregivers of patients with dementia. General practitioners can provide useful management and support information to aid caregivers through the various stages of disease progression.

In this issue, A/Prof Goh Lee Gan has selected ten current readings on topics related to depression, insomnia, dementia, and management of alcohol dependence and smoking.

REFERENCES

1. Chong SA, Abdin E, Vaingankar JA, et al. A population-based survey of mental disorders in Singapore. 2017.
2. Subramaniam M, Abdin E, Vaingankar JA, et al. Impact of psychiatric disorders and chronic physical conditions on health-related quality of life: Singapore Mental Health Study. *Journal of affective disorders*. 2013;147(1):325-30.
3. Vigo D, Thornicroft G, Atun R. Estimating the true global burden of mental illness. *The Lancet Psychiatry*. 2016;3(2):171-8.