

Letters to the Editor

Approaches to suicide prevention: Ideas and models presented by Japanese and international early career psychiatrists

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EACH YEAR SINCE 2006, 12 early career psychiatrists from around the world have been selected to participate in the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology (JSPN) Fellowship Award Symposium to form friendships and stimulate academic collaborations. An early career psychiatrist is defined as younger than 40 years of age or having less than 10 years' experience in psychiatry. In 2016, a Fellowship Award Program Strategic Meeting was added to promote international collaborative research not only among the early career psychiatrists but also among psychiatrists in general.

During the JSPN's 113th Annual Meeting in 2017, 'Approaches to Suicide Prevention' was discussed in three Fellowship Award Symposia. Twelve early career psychiatrists from 10 countries presented. The presentations are summarized and organized focusing on the suicide-prevention roles or models associated with development, lobbying, education, training, and research.

The presenter from Bangladesh has taken on the role of international affairs secretary for the Society for Suicide Prevention, which was founded in 2016. He also developed a suicide-management protocol for the first tertiary suicide-prevention clinic in the country in 2016. The presenter from the Philippines in collaboration with the Philippine Psychiatric Association has taken part in lobbying for the first Mental Health Act of the country. The presenter from Thailand has designed a 120-min lecture on suicide prevention for first-year medical students. The aim of the lecture is to increase awareness of suicide-related problems and decrease stigma about seeking help. The speaker representing Japan has been involved in the development and implementation of an educational program, Mental Health First Aid Japan (MHFA-J). The MHFA-J has successfully improved the skills and confidence of medical staff dealing with mental health crises, including suicide.¹ The presenter from Slovenia has been working on suicide prevention within the addiction services. She has acted as a trainer for developing services for drug users in community and prison environments in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo. The presenter from China is a member of the research team that has carried out the first national survey on suicide risk and major affective disorders. As patients with anxious depression show increased suicidal thoughts and behavior, she has examined risk factors for anxiety in major depressive disorder patients.² Finally, the presenter from Bulgaria has taken part in designing a predicament questionnaire, which explores social attitudes to suicide.

Early career psychiatrists in their respective countries have been working actively towards suicide prevention. As a result of this symposium and the Fellowship Award Program Strategic Meeting, an international collaborative research on 'Attitudes Towards

Suicide' was started. There will be a symposium at the 114th JSPN where preliminary results of the study will be presented.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare no relevant conflicts of interest.

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