

EDITORIAL

I feel privileged to follow the footsteps of two highly-esteemed Professors, Felice Lie Mak and Char Nie Chen as the third President of the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists. My predecessors have made major contributions to our speciality locally as well as in the international arena and raised the profile of psychiatry in Hong Kong and overseas. It is comforting to know that both Professor Lie Mak and Professor Chen are at the height of their physical and mental capacity and I hope that we will be able to rely on their expertise and wisdom for many years to come.

In the past few years there have been tremendous changes in the political, social and economical scene in Hong Kong which had significant impact on every facet of mental health care. Hong Kong's return to the mainland has far-reaching effects on the emotional, intellectual and spiritual atmosphere in which we practice psychiatry. In professional aspects, the establishment of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and that of the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists has been the most important event in the past few years. Under the guidance of my predecessors, the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists has consolidated itself and grown into a smoothly operating organization. The task facing us is to develop further and refine the function of our College permanently adjusting it to the newly emerging social and professional environment as well as the needs of our Fellows and Members.

Against the background of a less than flattering public image of medicine, and a growing need of evidence-based medicine, we must aim at further strengthening our CME activities. In addition to the existing, and fairly successful lectures and scientific symposia, the College is planning to introduce a lecture series under the heading of "recent advances in psychiatry" with a focus on clinical practice when outlining the latest findings in psychiatric research. In this age of rapidly accumulating scientific knowledge, this lecture series will help to keep us abreast with the most recent developments in psychiatry. Commissioning systematic reviews summarizing important areas of mental health care are also on our agenda. To sum up, we will attempt to make CME more relevant to routine clinical practice of both public and private psychiatrists.

With respect to public education on major mental health issues we should be even more proactive than before. We will devise a strategy on how to provide an interesting yet balanced view of psychiatric problems strictly within the limits of our professional code of ethics. I envisage that ethical-legal issues will increasingly dominate our practice. As a consequence, we will pay special attention to the work of the Ethics Committee of our College.

The same proactive approach should characterize our relationship with the Hospital Authority. We wish to continue our constructive collaboration with health authorities while upholding the interest of our patients and the principles of our profession. Sometimes this task requires a delicate balancing act.

My predecessors put Hong Kong on the map of international psychiatry. We shall continue this direction as reflected by our commitment in hosting the International Psychogeriatric Association Regional Meeting in Hong Kong in 2002 jointly with the Hong Kong Psychogeriatric Association and the Department of Psychiatry of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Furthermore, we shall pay particular attention to establish a close relationship with mainland Chinese psychiatrists. I foresee a very important role for the Hong Kong Journal of Psychiatry in this process. In my opinion, our Journal has the potential to become one of the sources of Chinese psychiatry for an international readership. The latest issue of the Journal publishing papers from the mainland exemplified this trend.

Our Journal is a very important forum for an exchange of opinion on scientific, clinical and general mental health care issues. I think that the Journal ought to broaden its range of active contributors. We could solicit communications from senior public and private psychiatrists in the form of narrative accounts of their vast clinical experience. In addition to papers striving for high scientific quality, a new, and yet untapped, source of authors are our senior trainees who should be encouraged to publish certain aspects of their thesis.

I am confident that the Hong Kong psychiatric community can, and will, meet the challenges we are facing in the professional and broader social context. A lively, regularly appearing Journal should play a significant role in the advancement of psychiatry in Hong Kong.

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