

Global Mental Health: Principles and Practice

edited by Vikram Patel, Harry Minas, Alex Cohen, and Martin J. Prince. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2014, 498 pages, \$59.95 (paper).

The aim of this volume is to address various aspects of this new and important discipline of international public health concerning mental health and illness. The volume is divided into 2 sections: the first focuses on principles of global mental health, and the second, on the practice of global mental health. The opening chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book by tracing the history of mental health treatments. This is done eloquently; however, the contributor fails to define sufficiently what is now generally known as *global mental health*. This omission is evident in some other chapters, but it is rectified in other chapters. This deficit is perhaps responsible for the book's lack of recognition of a new discipline—foreign health diplomacy, a central component of foreign policy and health policy.

In spite of the above shortcomings, the volume is a major contribution to the field. It is a comprehensive and very detailed exposition of our current knowledge and ideas of global mental health. The issues discussed in the first section are broad and include topics related to the global burden of mental disorders and the classification and diagnosis of mental disorders. In addition, the intricate interrelationships of culture, politics, funding, and the development agendas of various nations are discussed. That section concludes with excellent didactic presentations of strategies for the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental disorders.

The section on practices is equally broad. The information provided is likely to be very useful for students and practitioners of global mental health. The topics covered include the role of policy, evaluation, and monitoring and the needs of special populations (eg, children, women, and groups experiencing humanitarian crisis). Other subjects discussed include the relevance of research

and the hydra-headed phenomenon in mental health delivery and services that is stigma.

Two chapters in the second section are exemplary: chapters 17 and 19. Chapter 17 highlights the work of HealthNet TPO and the International Medical Corps. These agencies describe their work and research in various settings with a history of humanitarian crises, including countries such as Sierra Leone, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Haiti, to name a few. Again, the chapter has global and research relevance. In chapter 19 (research priorities), the contributors cite 2 stories depicting human rights abuses of individuals. One is about the practice of *pasung* (the shackling of mentally ill individuals) in Java. The other is about the treatment of prisoners in Cook County Jail in Chicago, Illinois. These 2 stories have immense relevance globally.

In summary, this volume is a welcome addition to the literature on global mental health. It is likely to be informative to students and practitioners. The suggestion by the editors that the book is not for specialists is highly disputable. Understandably, no edited volume can be perfect. Nevertheless, *Global Mental Health: Principles and Practices* will certainly contribute to this fledging discipline. However, the contribution could have been enhanced by greater discussion of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, the role of advocacy, and the emergence of foreign health diplomacy.

Samuel O. Okpaku, MD, PhD
sam.okpaku@gmail.com

Author affiliations: Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tennessee.

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