PUBLIC AND GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION FOR EMPATHIC CIVILISATION: A NEW GOAL OF PSYCHIATRIA DANUBINA

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„If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there"
Talmud

„Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness"
Martin Luther King Jr

Mental health is a fundamental issue from the public and global perspective, strongly associated with an increasing awareness that „there is no health without public mental health"(WHO 2005, Royal College of Psychiatrists 2010) as well as with the well-known slogan of WHO Alma Ata Conference (1978) „health for all in the Year 2000". Even more, global mental health has a great importance for the future of our civilization from many reasons. However, the significance of public and global mental health remains underappreciated not only among politicians but also among many psychiatrists and other mental health workers. According to Becker and Kleinman (2013) scientific publications related to global mental health show a significant deficit in comparison to those in other relatively well-researched and well grounded clinical fields. Public and global mental health has also not been well addressed in medical education. Social, political and global changes and conditions like widespread poverty, disasters, violence, wars, unemployment, human rights violations, migrations, etc. may precipitate the breakdown of vulnerable people and social systems and contribute to an increasing incidence of mental disorders. Throughout the globe, minds possessed by the destructive emotions of fear, anger, revenge and hate, politically or religiously driven, take us in a kind of group or collective madness associated with political and armed conflicts that occur between groups in a society or between nations with mass killings and destruction of nature and culture values. Wars all-over the globe are the significant source of mental health problems and psychopathology as well as a consequence of the particular collective psychopathology (see Jakovljevic 2011, Jakovljevic & Tomic 2016). High and increasing prevalence of mental problems and disorders and their striking socioeconomic burden associated with inadequate current treatment have been a substantial but frequently hidden proportion of the world's disease burden at country, continental and world-wide level (Prince et al. 2007, Millan et al. 2015). Mental disorders are often neglected, particularly in low- and middle- developed countries, which have limited resources to fight mental health problems. However, the focus should not be only on disease demotion and illness decrease, but also on mental health promotion and wellness increase.

There is no sane society without public mental health: Building compassionate societies – wishful thinking or reality?

The term public mental health is often used with different and very broad meanings referring to all epidemiologic, intervention and mental health service research. It may imply a primary focus on the mental health of public and whole populations, in opposite to just the mental health and well-being of single individuals. Public mental health is often taken to mean emphasis on prevention rather than a focus on treatment services and management of a clinical problem. Generally speaking, public mental health represents the science and practice of improving mental health and well-being and preventing mental disorders through organized activities of society, institutions, communities, organizations, and individuals.

The ways how society views, defines or creates mental disorders (see Michel Foucault: Madness and Civilization, 1961) are very important issues for public mental health. Building sane (Fromm 1963), kinder (de Waal 2009), fair (Marmot 2014) or compassionate (Gilbert 2013) societies are very challenging concepts from the public mental health perspective. Mental health should not be defined only by the adjustment to a particular social order, but by the extent to which a particular social order satisfy authentic human needs. A harmonius society is based on a fair balance between interest of each individual and those of community as well as on long-term atmosphere of reciprocal benevolence (Ricard 2015). Public mental health and social well-being are very closely interrelated but distinct issues with bi-directional relationship. Public mental health is an important component of the social well-being while social well-being supports individual and public mental health and well-being. Social well-being is associated with human rights promotion, social justice, social security, solidarity, social capital, social trust, social connectedness, and social networks. Social

well-being depends on: 1. the sum of the individual mental well-being in a group, community or society; 2. the quality of government – local, organizational, national, and international; 3. quality of services and provision of support for those in need; 4. the fair distribution of resources including income; 5. the norm with regard to interpersonal relationships in a group community or society, including respect for others and their needs, human rights, compassion and empathy, and authentic interaction. Mental well-being refers to the capacity to 1.realize our abilities, live a life with a purpose and meaning, and make a positive contribution to our communities; 2.form positive relationships with others, and feel connected and supported; 3.experience peace of mind, contentment, happiness and joy; 4.take responsibility for oneself and for others as appropriate. It is more than absence of mental illness/disorder; it represents the positive side of mental health and can be achieved by people with a diagnosis of mental disorder; inextricably linked with individuals' physical well-being; inextricably linked, as both cause and effect, with social well-being. Research has indicated that practicing love, kindness, and compassion for ourselves and others builds our confidence, help us create meaningful, caring relationships, increases our resilience to mental disorders and promotes human rights, physical and mental health and social well-being.

From Homo Sapiens Economicus to Homo Sapiens Empathicus: Education for Global Mental Health and Empathic Civilization

Global mental health refers to the international perspective on different aspects of mental health in the field of study, research and practice with the aim of improving mental health and well-being all over the world. Generally speaking it includes the epidemiology of mental disorders in different countries, their treatment options and possible cost-effective interventions to meet specific needs, mental health education, human resources in mental health, human rights, the structure of mental health care systems, economic and political aspects, etc. From the global mental health perspective we have to recognize very fundamental fact about ourselves: we are a species that has evolved to thrive on love, kindness and compassion associated with our interconnectedness and interdependency. Although human history is full of atrocities, cruelties and evil behavior, empathy and compassion have been defined as one of the most important and distinctive qualities of the human mind. Selfish exploitation, violence and war have become more and more not only as remarkably gross and inefficient ways for resolving the world's problems and social conflicts but also the source of new injustice, hate, violence, suffering, poverty and waste of human and nature resources. Love, empathy, compassion and altruism are the essence of humanism and human condition. The only thing that matters is life living and acting through love. An operative faith, a faith that will move mountains, has been grounded in

Love which practice patience in doing good. Loving what you are doing, and doing what you love is a key for wellness and well-being. Very few of us will do great things, but all of us can do small things with great love. Compassion, caring, pro-social and prohumanistic behavior are fundamental for well-being, mental health and our capacity to foster creative relationships with each other and the world we live in. Empathy is the invisible force that holds society and civilization together. It involves empathy for difference and openness to diversity. Love, empathy, kindness, gentleness, and compassion are like basic food for our minds. People with mental well-being are generous, wise and compassionate, they relate to others using the skills of emotional literacy and accept and manage conflict without manipulation and coercion. Mental health literacy is an issue of huge importance. Public and global mental health are the products based on human rights, love, gratitude, reverence, empathy and compassion. Education for love, empathy and compassion are pillars and foundation of the global mental health. Compassion as the final and the noblest result of empathy (Ferrucci 2007) is an esprit de corps of the empathic civilization of love. Choice between clash of civilizations or dialogue among them leading to the empathic global civilization of love is the most fundamental issue from the public and global mental health perspective.

Do we need to re-think the goals and practices of psychiatry from perspectives of Public and Global Mental Health?

Psychiatry is the branch of medicine focused on the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders (APA 2016). According Jeste & Palmer (2015) these goals are not sufficient and they promote a positive psychiatry „as the science and practice of psychiatry that seeks to understand and promote well-being through assessment and interventions involving positive psychosocial attributes in people who have or are at high risk for developing mental or physical illnesses". By considering mental health problems as primarily individual, psychiatry has often contributed to obscuring the relationship between individual suffering, personal estrangement, mental disorders, and social, economic, cultural, and political contexts in which patients live. Positive social psychiatry and positive psychology „can show the world what actions lead to well-being, to positive individuals, to flourishing communities, and to a just society" (Blazer & Kinghorn 2015). The time is ripe that psychiatry expands its' goals, epistemology and praxis (see Jakovljevic 2012). Psychiatry based on global mental health principles (see Sartorius 2016) requires as suggested by Alarcon (2016) „a genuine integration of the work of primary care providers and mental health professionals through the constitution of multidisciplinary, democratized teams open to the active participation of the patients themselves and their families.

Mental health promotion should be integrated into all aspects of health and social policy, education, and delivery of primary, secondary and tertiary general health care. Negotiation, mediation and conflict prevention and resolution skills are very important from public and global mental health perspective contributing significantly to the peaceful functioning of the communities, collective well-being and quality of life. Global illiterates are dangerous because they promote military force as the way to peace, and wars as the way to the better future. Both, wars and peace begin in the minds of men. In long term peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by mutually understanding, empathy and respect. Public and global mental health psychiatry can help people and communities to thrive and to turn our world from violence, self-centeredness, and narcissism toward kindness, empathy, compassion and love. The idea of creating a socially conscious mind-body medicine and psychiatry as well as an empathic civilization might seem all too utopian. The fabric of our life and public and global mental health is maze of care, compassion, solidarity, and mutual service. Global mental health education, scholarship, and advocacy for human rights, empathy and peace are academic response to silo mentality in psychiatry with regards to global mental health (Oreskovic 2016). The human rights violation is a fundamental source of mental problems and psychopathology as well as a consequence of mental disorders and psychiatric diagnosis. Psychiatry is not just branch of medicine concerned with diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders; it is much larger. It is about individual, family, public and global mental health and well-being, purpose and meaning of life, insight, love, growth and survival of our civilization. It is about raising Mental Health Literacy, and education for Humanistic Psychoculture, Sane, Compassionate and Fair Society, and Empathic Civilization of Love.

Due to low priority given to mental health nowadays, there have been increasing calls for mental health promotion on global, international, national and local level. Psychiatria Danubina is going to devote one issue to public and global mental health promotion each year. We invite partners to join our project Public Mental Health for Compassionate Societies and Global Mental Health for Empathic Civilization.

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