

THE SOCIAL HISTORY CONTEXT AND CURRENT SETTINGS OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE

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That was the theme of the XI Encontro de Pesquisadores em Saúde Mental e Especialistas em Enfermagem Psiquiátrica (11th Meeting of Mental Health Researchers and Psychiatric Nursing Specialists), which took place in June 2010 in Ribeirão Preto, organized by the Department of Psychiatric Nursing and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo College of Nursing at Ribeirão Preto, and sponsored by government funding agencies (CNPq- *National Council of Scientific and Technological Development* and CAPES-Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel).

Mental health is a category encompassing several possibilities, different analyses and perspectives that will comprise a knowledge area dedicated to the search of the theoretical grounds of mental illness and suffering and/or forms

of intervention to minimize their manifestations.

Although terms referring to illness, such as disorder and dysfunction, are consolidated among some segments of mental health workers, others prefer using the term mental suffering to refer to manifestations that indicate any compromised brain function. For those professionals, mental suffering comprises different levels of neurologic, psychological, and motor alterations, in addition to psychopathological conditions expressed through acute or milder episodes, which are all the same hard on the patients going through these human experiences.

There has been an increase in the number of situations involving mental health, because life in society has implied handling experiences of greater complexities due to the need to face constant changes and hostile events, which most people are not ready to deal with.

From this perspective, the theme was presented in the referred event with the purpose of rising discussions to address several harmful conditions that result from biological (anatomic-physiologic) and somatogenic factors, as well as the individuals' internal factors, such as representations and feelings that characterize particular behaviors, and aggressions from their social environment.

Taking into account the importance of rescuing the professional role of nurses in mental health care, special emphasis was given to nursing practice in the care to mental patients and to the production of specific knowledge from a historical-analytical perspective.

The life context, the areas where people live and transit, recalled the binomial violence and health and the experiences causing stress and existential crises, as well as the coping strategies that people use.

According to the Brazilian health guidelines, mental health care should be a priority at the Psychosocial Care Center (Centro de Atenção Psicossocial) and other health services. Today, the care

delivered at those services is being evaluated, as are the service locations themselves, with the purpose to prove their efficacy and identify strengths and weaknesses. That diagnosis is important especially to guarantee the survival of the theoretical-practical paradigm of the psychiatric reform, which inspired this modality of services that, unquestionably, have benefitted mental patients.

For this reason, learning about how the rehabilitation and social reinsertion of mental patients has taken place in other countries is an opportunity to add experience and information to the current theoretical and practical knowledge of mental health workers in Brazil.

These issues were part of the program in the referred event, which counted with 299 enrolled participants, 82% of which were from the Southeast of Brazil, 6.0% from the South, 5.4% from the Central-West, 4.5% from the North and Northeast and 2.0% from abroad. Apart from the state of São Paulo, the states with greater participation were Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Paraná and Goiás, in this order.

As for the profession of the participants, 45.5% were nursing professionals (4 nursing aides) and 11% were workers of other health areas, most were psychologists. There were five participants (1.6%) from other areas, and as for student participants, 34.5% were undergraduates and 7% were graduates from several health courses.

Furthermore, there were 318 submissions, 29 of which were presented as full-text to run for the prize *Professora Doutora Maria Aparecida Minzoni*. There were 309 studies approved for oral and poster presentations and three were selected to receive the referred prize and honor mentions.

This special edition includes part of the experience brought about by the

referred event, as it includes some of the conferences held at the round tables and the prized studies. Our expectation is that readers will use the articles as a source for studying, reflecting and also as inspiration to develop new research, educational material or motivate discussions between students and coworkers.

SMAD is a new journal, which has been gaining acknowledgment in Brazil and other countries, especially in Latin America. It is very important that our readers use SMAD as a media to disseminate knowledge as well as a source of reference. Please let us know if we are meeting your expectations. Write us with your suggestions.

Enjoy your reading.

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