

S16: Public Lecture: A New Age in Alzheimer's Disease

Authors: Jacobo Mintzer, Edgardo Reich, Diego Aguilar

Alzheimer's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder affecting over 55 million people worldwide, with 300,000 sufferers residing in Argentina. Over the last 10 years with the emergence of monoclonal antibodies, we have witnessed a radical change in our approach to Alzheimer's disease. Today, we can see the lesion of Alzheimer's disease in the living brain up to 17 years before the onset of symptoms. Furthermore, we have developed blood tests that allow us to identify those at risk to have amyloid in the brain and, in the last two years, a new group of disease-modifying treatments has been approved for clinical use. What remains to be elucidated is how these revolutionary changes will impact patient care and perceptions of Alzheimer's disease in society. Additionally, how these new, often expensive tools to fight Alzheimer's disease will be accessible in developing countries is also unknown. These issues will be discussed during our presentation with a panel of experts in the field. Dr. Reich will present the latest advances on biomarkers and new treatments, Dr. Aguilar will discuss the implications of this new approach for the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease around the world, and Dr. Mintzer will discuss different options that will make these treatments available in developing countries with a focus on Latin America.

S17: The translation of digital technology to promote mental health of older adults

Authors: Sally Chan¹, Rick Kwan^{1,2}, Fowie Ng^{1,3}, Bobo Hi-Po Lau⁴, & Alex Chan^{1,5}

1. Translational Research Centre for Digital Mental Health, Tung Wah College, Hong Kong
2. School of Nursing, Tung Wah College, Hong Kong
3. School of Management, Tung Wah College, Hong Kong
4. Department of Counselling & Psychology, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Hong Kong
5. School of Arts and Humanities, Tung Wah College, Hong Kong

Digital mental health - The use of apps, the internet, mobile technologies, virtual reality, and social media for mental health and wellness - rapidly rose in popularity during COVID-19 and continues to expand in the post-COVID-19 era. There is a general recognition of the value and contribution of digital technologies in providing personalized mental health care tools, including health education, health promotion, health maintenance, diagnosis, treatment, interventions, and rehabilitation.

Globally, around 14% of adults aged 60 and over live with mental health conditions, with depression and anxiety being the most common. In Hong Kong, a recent study found that 14% of older adults said they had displayed signs of depression, and 12% had experienced anxiety. Critical risk factors for mental health conditions in older adults include social isolation, loneliness, reduced mobility, and frailty. However, many mental health problems are unrecognized and untreated. Lack of available mental health services, stigma, and cost are significant barriers to help-seeking.

The high prevalence rates of mental health problems and low levels of access to traditional mental health services, combined with the rapid development of digital and emerging technologies, led to the rapid development of digital mental health services. We would like to know whether digital mental health works for older adults and what factors contribute to the success of digital mental health interventions.