

Highlights of this issue

By Jayakumar Menon

Clinical psychiatry has always been more accommodative of the divergent methods of scientific enquiry and focus is back on enhancing the core clinical skills in Psychiatry. We are re-discovering the values of single case reports, case series as much as we look forward to systematic reviews. The standardisation of reporting with the acceptance of guidelines (eg. Equator Network) has helped immensely in ensuring transparency and quality of health research. In this issue of the journal, we have articles that cover diverse areas like First Episode Psychosis, Sleep Disorders, Interface of SLE and Psychiatry, medication adherence in depression, antenatal depression, and epigenetics.

The editorial in this issue by G K Kannan highlights the urgent need to bridge the gap between research and practice in Autism care. Early diagnosis and intervention assumes critical importance in bringing about a better outcome in this condition. He argues the need for reliable, formalised and effective intervention modules suitable for the local population to be made available across all regions to address this lacunae.

Mahatme and team have provided a comprehensive review of epigenetics in Psychiatry and summarised the findings in diverse areas like memory, addiction, depression, fear, and maternal behaviour. They argue that further research in this field could pave the way for reliable biomarkers for psychiatric disorders.

ECT has been getting a lot of bad press recently, and there is increasing reluctance in its use among professionals, especially with the new Mental Health Act being implemented. The case series by Chandan et al is a timely reminder of the benefits of the time-tested treatment modality in a unique patient population group- First Episode Psychosis. It also highlights the heterogeneity of presentation and etiology of the FEP. However ECTs utility in life-threatening situations is undeniably the key message from the case series.

The study protocol on Antenatal Depression by Sushma and team is being presented in the journal for further collaborative work with other centres. There is an urgent need to have population based data on maternal (antenatal and post partum) psychiatric comorbidity to plan effective interventions suited to our society. Non-pharmacological modes of management assumes importance in this group, considering the long term impact of the illness and treatment on mothers and children. The study is part of the larger effort to identify, evaluate and develop a culturally appropriate and economically viable wellness (positive mental health) strategy in pregnant women.

A review of Sleep Disorders in women by Mathew et al covers the most commonly seen problems and the current best practice methods. While there is established evidence of the benefits of good sleep in physical and mental health of individuals across all ages, it is the increasing recognition of sleep disorders as a marker of neuro-degenerative disorders that makes it an important area for research.

Reddy et al have highlighted some of the factors determining adherence to anti-depressants by women out-patients. It is an important enquiry considering the high prevalence of the condition in the general population and the mental health of women being neglected more in our socio-cultural settings. The study highlights the need for psycho-social supports in maintaining employment, and importance of support from spouse and other family members in ensuring recovery.

The case report from Soumya about SLE patient presenting with Manic episode is a welcome addition to the sparse literature in this area from the Indian context. Rajiv et al had done a prevalence study on Neuro-Psychiatric manifestations of SLE presenting to a

tertiary medical centre in Bangalore. There are also studies showing the quality of life is severely impaired in people with SLE and worsened when they have co-morbid psychiatric illness. More awareness regarding the high prevalence of Neuropsychiatric disorders in SLE will help us identify patients requiring specialist input through Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry services.

Hope you enjoy reading this issue and we look forward to feedbacks and contributions from researchers and academics from across the world.

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