

The Development of Geriatric Psychiatry Services in Singapore

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Abstract

Singapore is ageing rapidly and the need to develop a comprehensive range of psychiatric services for the elderly is urgent. To cater to the increase in the number of elderly with mental health problems, a multi-pronged, collaborative approach to developing services is necessary. Over the last decade, the development of such services has been initiated by the Department of Geriatric Psychiatry, Woodbridge Hospital and Institute of Mental Health, and effected through dynamic elderly networks consisting of health, social and voluntary organisations. This has facilitated the integration of psychogeriatric services within the overall framework of elderly services. With the establishment of the Integrated Framework of Healthcare of the Elderly by the Ministry of Health in 2000, the importance and effectiveness of building partnerships in service provision have been demonstrated. The challenge for the future is to attract and retain geriatric-trained healthcare professionals, enhance their training in the early diagnosis and management of psychiatric disorders in the elderly, improve the support of family caregivers and expand the range of quality psychogeriatric services.

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