

Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group (SPSIG)

Annual Report to Council 2016

Activities

During 2016 the SPSIG has held the following meetings/events:

Date	Venue/Location	Subject/purpose of meeting/nos. of attendees
18.3.16	RCP, London	Interfaith & Interface / conference / 100 attendees
25.11.16	RCP, London	Hallucinations and Spiritual Experience / conference / 201 attendees

Background

We have over 3000 members and have been running for 17 years. The SPSIG was set up to provide a forum for psychiatrists to explore the influence of the major religions that shape the cultural values and aspirations of psychiatrist and patient alike. The spiritual aspirations of persons not identifying with any one particular faith are held to be of no less importance, as well as the viewpoint of those who hold that spirituality is independent of religion.

The SPSIG aims to contribute a framework of ideas of general interest to the College, stimulating discussion and promoting an integrative approach to mental health care.

Executive Committee

The SPSIG Executive Committee comprises:

Name	Role
Paramabandhu Groves	Chair
Chris Findlay	Financial Officer
Ali Gray	Secretary
Jo Barber	Service user rep
Andrew Clark	
Chris Cook	
Simon Dein	
Sarah Eagger	
Sophie Thomson	
Chetna Kang	
Andrew Powell	
Russell Razzaque	
Stephen Turner	

Rob Waller	
Lucy Grimwade	Trainee rep
Nick Hallett	Trainee rep

Commentary

Over the last year we aimed to run two meetings. The first meeting, Interfaith and Interface: The Contributions of Faith Groups to Mental Health was an opportunity to hear about how various faith groups respond to the challenge of mental health. We heard about initiatives from a wide variety of faith groups, often starting as a way to meet the particular needs of their local population.

The second meeting, Hallucinations and Spiritual Experience: Voices, Visions and Revelation, was especially well-attended (it was sold out). This conference explored the overlap and differences between non-ordinary perceptions, particularly hallucinations, and spiritual and religious experience.

The SPSIG was delighted to see the publication by the College of a second book on the subject of spirituality. *Spirituality and Narrative in Clinical Psychiatry: Stories of Mind and Soul*, edited by Chris Cook, Andrew Powell and Andrew Sims (all formerly chairs of the SPSIG), came out in February this year, and has been selling well.

A new venture for the SPSIG was creating a video about the SIG. The video was launched in March and includes details about the SIG, issues to do with spirituality and mental health, and also interviews with our service user rep and with a trainee rep. We produced two newsletters (published on the College website), and more details of the events over the last year together with book reviews can be found there. We were pleased to award the SPSIG essay prize to Gunjan Sharma for her essay, *Losing the Soul*. Happily, the College's CPD module, Exploring spirituality with people who use mental health services (written by Sarah Eagger and Sumudu Ferdinando on behalf of the SPSIG executive), has now become available for free.

In 2017 we plan to run two meetings: one entitled Silent Prejudice: Stigma, Spirituality and Mental Health; and the other on compassion.

Paramabandhu Groves, SPSIG Chair

08 December 2016