Partnerships for Community Mental Health
Part 1

China

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China – Australia Partnership

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Background

- In 2003, a workshop on mental health and aging in Beijing started relationship between Peking University Institute of Mental Health and Asia-Australia Mental Health
- In 2003, after outbreak of SARS in China, a three-year consecutive investment to rebuild China’s public health system was given as a commitment of MOH, PRC
- Mental health officially integrated into public health through “686” Program established by the MOH as a national management mechanism and network for community-based psychotic disorder prevention, treatment and rehabilitation

Background

- 686 to provide patient-centered, seamless, function-oriented and multi-disciplinary services in the community, which is based on Australian model
- Peking University Institute of Mental Health appointed as National Office for Mental Health Program to manage 686 Program
- Overseen by an international advisory group with experts drawn from Asia-Australia Mental Health
- A starting point of China-Australia partnership in community mental health —— develop a new model for mental health care in China with extremely valuable lessons learned in Victoria’s journey and avoiding the mistakes Victorians made
China-Australia partnership: 
Institutional level

- Technical supports provided by Australian advisory group including trainings, evaluation development, joint research publications and annual plan sessions
- As of 15th April 2011, 686 Program covers 680 districts and counties in 161 cities/provinces and serves a population of 330 million.

- 277,000 registered psychosis patients and 200,000 high-risk patients regularly followed up with free medication distributed to 94,000 needy patients and free hospitalization provided for 12,400 people.
- Also play a large role in ensuring the security of China’s major events in recent years
China-Australia partnership: Institutional level

- Then the program extended to include a third partner
- In 2007, a tri-partite training program collaboratively developed by Peking University Institute of Mental Health, Asia-Australia Mental Health, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong
- To train multi-skilled case managers in community mental health service delivery to develop best practice of allied health disciplines (nursing, social work, occupational therapy, psychology)
- Over 160 Chinese mental health professionals have participated in this ongoing and practical training program in Hong Kong.

China-Australia partnership: Ministerial level

- Priority given by leadership
  - Fully support given to National office of Mental Health Program and AAMH by MoH
  - Ministerial level visit to Victoria (Ms. Xu Guihua, Ms. Kong Lingzhi, Ms. Yan Jun and Mr. Zhang Li et al.)
  - Meeting with Governor-General of Australia, Ms. Quentin Bryce
  - An International Advisory Committee appointed (AAMH personnel: Prof. Bruce Singh, A/Prof. Chee Ng, Prof. Helen Herrman, Prof. Ed Chiu, Ms. Julia Fraser, and Ms. Margaret Goding, et al.)

- Policy influence
  - As implementation research, this partnership provided evidences for policy documents of MoH
What we learned

- The rapid development of China’s community mental health service over the past ten years inextricably linked to the strength of its international partnerships, most particularly the partnership with Australia
- Our model is based on a strong bond of mutuality.
- Technical excellence and valid experience were essential foundation stones for partnership success
- But to be truly useful we need to develop a deep appreciation of the cultural, socio-economic and political complexities of China and their impact on community mental health reform
- The China-Australia collaboration in mental health, like all successful partnerships, needed from its infancy to create a way of working that could accommodate potential and inevitable setbacks and “lost in translation” moments.
- We learned over time to trust.

A unique partnership

- “The project partners work now as one team, not Chinese not Australian but a team that understands each others strengths and needs and is focused on improving the lives of the most neglected in all populations - people with mental illness.”