

MEDIA RELEASE

19 NOVEMBER 2024

INAUGURAL BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MENTAL HEALTH EXPLORES KEY SCHIZOPHRENIA AND BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTION ISSUES

1. The inaugural Biennial International Congress on Mental Health (BICOMH) 2024, organised by the National Healthcare Group (NHG)'s Institute of Mental Health (IMH) was opened by Ms Sun Xueling, Minister of State for Home Affairs, and Social and Family Development this morning. Ms Sun also launched 'Navigating Internet Gaming Disorder: A manual for Helping Professionals' – a book produced by IMH's National Addiction Management Service (Annex A).
2. BICOMH, which runs from 19 to 22 November, features two conferences: the 8th Asian Congress of Schizophrenia Research (ACSR) and the International Society of Addiction Medicine (ISAM) Regional Conference. The ACSR programme line-up focuses on optimising recovery for individuals living with schizophrenia, while the ISAM Regional Conference explores the role of community support for behavioural addiction recovery.
3. Themed 'Building Bridges for an Effective Mental Health Ecosystem', BICOMH's international and local speakers will share their insights and expertise, with around 200 participants from healthcare, social service, education, and community care sectors.
4. "Even though schizophrenia is the most severe of mental disorders, it is not a common disorder and it doesn't deserve the stigma and misunderstanding associated with it, and by proxy all mental disorders. Addictions carry a double stigma and there is a need to help improve outcomes based on the evidence of what works and what doesn't. This conference will help dispel myths and improve understanding of these potentially severe yet treatable conditions. This is not just for psychiatrists but all clinicians interested in the pathogenesis of disease as well as the state of the art interventions available today," said A/Prof Daniel Fung, Chief Executive Officer, IMH and Chairman, BICOMH 2024 Advisory Committee.
5. Held at One Farrer Hotel, the four-day congress comprises 2 keynote presentations, 8 plenaries, 12 tracks, and 2 free public forums that explore the developments in treatment, rehabilitation and recovery strategies for schizophrenia and behavioural addictions.
6. The Congress features both local and international speakers, including Professor Peter B Jones, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry, University of Cambridge, and Professor Marc N Potenza, Steven M Southwick Professor of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine.
7. Professor Jones has been involved in the management of all stages of psychotic disorders, and co-led the award-winning CAMEO (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Assessing, Managing and Enhancing Outcomes) early intervention mental health service. He will be sharing his thoughts on psychotic experiences and early intervention in his keynote address on 19 November.

8. Professor Potenza is also Director of the Division on Addictions Research at Yale, the Center of Excellence in Gambling Research, and has received multiple national and international awards for excellence in research and clinical care. Professor Potenza will be shedding light on the complexities of behavioural addictions in his keynote address on 21 November.
9. The programme line-up also includes two free public forums. More programme highlights can be found in Annex B.

BICOMH Free Public Forums

- **(20 Nov, 4pm – 5.30pm) Public Forum on Understanding Schizophrenia:** Explore ways to better support persons with schizophrenia in the community. Learn more about schizophrenia care, how case management helps in addressing their needs, and hear from a caregiver. Speakers at this public forum are Dr Syed Haruyn Alhabsyi, NMP and Medical Doctor & Consultant Psychiatrist at the Starfish Clinic of Psychiatry and Mental wellness, together with Ms Liaw Zi Yun, Team lead at Singapore Association for Mental Health. Register here: www.bicomh.com/acsr-public-forum/
- **(22 Nov, 2pm – 4pm) Navigating Screen Time: Supporting Health Digital Habits for Children:** Excessive screen time and gaming habits among children is a growing concern. Experts at this forum will be sharing strategies to help children develop healthy digital habits, manage screen use, prevent addiction, and foster a balanced lifestyle. Speakers include Dr Chen Xuejiao, Senior Scientist from Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), Singapore and Dr Kang Ying Qi from the National University of Singapore, and Dr Melvyn Zhang Weibin from IMH. Register here: www.bicomh.com/isam-public-forum/

For more information on the conference, please go to: www.bicomh.com.

Annex A – ‘Navigating Internet Gaming Disorder: A manual for Helping Professionals’

‘Navigating Internet Gaming Disorder: A manual for Helping Professionals’ is written as part of NAMS’ ongoing commitment to support helping professionals in addressing the growing concern of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). This manual provides further insights into Gaming disorder and the associated psychiatric co-morbidities, and guide individuals from the helping professions in their initial assessment.

The book is produced by NAMS, with Dr Melvyn Zhang as the lead author. Authored by Dr Melvyn Zhang, Consultant at National Addictions Management Service at IMH, with contributions from clinicians from NAMS. This comprehensive guide explores the intricacies of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) and gives readers an insight into this rapidly evolving behavioural addiction.

As gaming disorders become increasingly prevalent, this manual equips professionals with insights to help those at risk. Through research summaries, case studies, the book addresses common co-occurring mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, and introduces effective approaches like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Navigating Internet Gaming Disorder: A manual for Helping Professionals equips helping professionals with the tools necessary to understand, assess, and help individuals impacted by IGD, promoting healthier digital habits and well-being in the community.

The book will be available for download at the NAMS website: www.nams.sg

Annex B – BICOMH 2024 Programme Highlights

ACSR

- **(19 Nov, 1.45pm) Breakout sessions in 3 main tracks** cover in-depth insight on the detection and early intervention of psychosis, treatment resistance, cognition and schizophrenia, and relapse prevention. Participants will get to explore the latest treatment intervention strategies which include **From the Classroom to the Community – Youth Mental Health in Japan and New Intervention Strategies** by Dr Mizuno Masafumi from Tokyo Metropolitan Matsuzawa Hospital, **ECT for Treatment Resistance Schizophrenia**, presented by Dr Tor Phern Chern, and **VR interventions in Early Psychosis** by Prof Chung Young-Chul, from Jeonbuk National University Medical School.
- **(20 Nov, 11am) Parallel tracks** includes overall topics that explore the early onset / early psychosis through **Early Onset Psychosis in EPIP – A Story of Hope** by Ms Sarah Ann Tay, IMH, rehabilitation landscape and approaches through presentations like **A Collaborative Approach to Recovery Post Psychosis** by Ms Ingrid Amann, WellWays Australia, **Social Inclusion: The Singapore Story in Community Mental Health Development, Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Recovery** by Dr Joseph Leong Jern-Yi, Association for Psychiatric Rehabilitation in Singapore. Participants will also be apprised of the importance of peer support and community in the recovery journey. Presentations like **Experiences of Informal Caregivers Caring for Individuals with Chronic Schizophrenia: A Systematic Review and Meta-Synthesis** by Ms Tay Jia Yee can also give participants an in-depth insight into such support systems. This session will also explore the digital future of mental health, through presentations like **Digital Mental Health – Realities and Possibilities** by Dr Christopher Cheok, IMH.

ISAM Regional Conference

- **(21 Nov, 1.45pm) Breakout Sessions, organised across three main tracks**, explore detection and early intervention, treatment and relapse prevention, as well as research and policies regarding behavioural addictions that range from gambling, sex, as well as strategies and support for youth regarding digital wellness. Key highlights include **Gaming & Social Media** by Dr Munidasa Winslow from Promises Healthcare, **Working with Youths on Problematic Porn use** by Mr Tham Yuen Han, WE CARE Community Services. Participants will also learn more about the impact and implications of behavioural addictions through **Behavioural Addictions and Singapore Criminal Law** by Dr Christopher Cheok, IMH and **Economic & Societal Implications of Behaviour Addictions** by Dr Jeremy Lim, AMILI.
- **(22 Nov, 11am) Breakout Session 2** will cover a breadth of topics on excessive smartphone use, screen time and gaming disorders, as well as the intervention approaches to such issues. Participants will also be able to engage in a fireside chat addressing pressing behavioural addiction issues that youth today are facing. Through topics like **Unlocking Lootboxes: Understanding the Impact of Gaming on Child Brain Development** by Dr Serenella Tolomeo, A*STAR, **Prevalence of Gaming Disorder in Young Adults/University Population** by Professor Peter Chew, James Cook University, as well as **Summary of Research Findings In The Use and Misuse of Social Media Among Youth: Implications for Social Intervention** and **Adolescent and Parents' Perspectives About Gaming Disorder Intervention**, by Professor Hyekyung Choo, National University of Singapore, participants will get a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and realities young people face in the digital age.

For the full programme, please visit:

ACSR: www.bicomh.com/acsr-programme-d1/

ISAM Regional Conference: www.bicomh.com/isam-programme-d1/

Chinese Translations

Biennial International Congress on Mental Health	双年国际心理健康大会
Institute of Mental Health	心理卫生学院
National Healthcare Group (NHG)	国立健保集团
Asian Congress of Schizophrenia Research (ACSR)	亚洲精神分裂症研究大会
International Society of Addiction Medicine (ISAM) Regional Conference	国际成瘾医学学会区域会议
Associate Professor Daniel Fung Chief Executive Officer Institute of Mental Health BICOMH 2024 Advisory Committee Chairman	冯舜圣副教授 心理卫生学院院长 2024双年国际心理健康大会咨询委员会主席
Dr Melvyn Zhang Consultant Institute of Mental Health	张炜彬医生 精神科顾问 心理卫生学院

About the Institute of Mental Health (IMH)

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH), a member of the National Healthcare Group, is the only tertiary psychiatric care institution in Singapore. Located on the sprawling 23-hectare campus of Buangkok Green Medical Park in the north-eastern part of Singapore, IMH offers a multidisciplinary and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and therapy services in hospital-based and community-based settings. The 2,000-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (aged below 19 years), adults and the elderly. Besides providing clinical services, IMH dedicates resources to carry out mental health promotion and raise mental health literacy. IMH also leads in mental health research and training the next generation of mental health professionals in Singapore. For more information, please visit www.imh.com.sg.

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