

Obituaries

Professor Hamid Ghodse



Formerly Professor of Psychiatry and of International Drug Policy, University of London, and Director, International Centre for Drug Policy, St George's, University of London

Hamid Ghodse, one of the UK's most eminent figures in international psychiatry, died on 27 December 2012. Born in Iran on 30 April 1938, he first visited the UK as a boy scout and immediately felt a great

affinity with the country. Education was highly prized in his family, and after qualifying in medicine in Tehran in 1965 he was determined to move to England to pursue his post-graduate career. In 1968 he began training in psychiatry, first of all at Barts Hospital with Professor Linford Rees, and then at the Institute of Psychiatry with Professor Griffith Edwards at the Addiction Research Unit. Griffith Edwards died in September 2012, and Hamid wrote a warm tribute to his former mentor, which was published recently in *The Psychiatrist*.¹ In 1978 he was recruited to St George's Hospital Medical School and in 1987 became Professor of Addictive Behaviour, and in 2003 Professor of Psychiatry and International Drug Policy. He inspired a generation of young psychiatrists with his enthusiasm for research into substance misuse. Consequently, his department flourished; it became a vibrant centre of clinical undergraduate and postgraduate multidisciplinary training and research.

Hamid was a man of extraordinary energy and he possessed talents that extended far beyond these shores. He early on realised the importance of ensuring there was a clear evidence-based international policy for the management of narcotic control. Pioneering research led to the establishment of unique epidemiological databases and to the development of World Health Organization guidelines on the rational prescribing of narcotic analgesics and other internationally controlled drugs, as well as to the appropriate management of addictions. His burgeoning international reputation led to his being elected to the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board in 1992. Subsequently, he became its President for a record ten times.

He also made an indelible mark on the Royal College of Psychiatrists. His astute negotiating skills, which were much admired, led to the promotion of a remarkable range of innovations. Hamid brought superb leadership to many key committees where he showed a unique ability to catalyse and realise objectives. His contributions to the College were not only in the field of substance misuse as Chair of the Substance Misuse Section between 1990 and 1994. He also sat on the

Court of Electors from 1993 to 1995 and he was Vice President of the College from 2000 to 2002. More recently, Hamid contributed to the Civil Honours Committee from 2007, becoming its Chair in 2011. Yet, arguably, his most important legacy to the College was his work for the international members: he established the Board of International Affairs and became its director in 2000, and soon afterwards persuaded the College to found the novel journal *International Psychiatry*, which he edited until his death. In recognition of his achievements, the College conferred on him its two highest honours: an Honorary Fellowship in 2006 and in 2011 a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Besides his contributions to the College, Hamid presided over many aspects of academic medicine more widely through the National Health Service (NHS), the University, Department of Health, and the Home Office. From 2006 to 2009, he was Medical Director of the National Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards and he held Non-Executive Directorships of the National Patient Safety Agency and National Clinical Assessment Authority. He was also advisor to the Parliamentary and NHS Ombudsman, and Chair of the International Health Advisory Board of the Department of Health. University commitments included Chair of the Subject Panel of Psychiatry and coordinator of the Higher Degrees Committee at the University of London, and visiting professor to Beijing University. The award of a CBE in 1999 and a DSc by London University in 2002 acknowledged the outstanding contributions he had made to psychiatric services and academia during his professional career, and which he continued until his death.

He was a dedicated doctor, a wise mentor and a dear friend. We feel very privileged to have known him. He was dynamic, personable and gregarious. With his wife, Barbara, whose tremendous support has been unflinching, they entertained warmly. He saw his colleagues as an extension of his family: indeed, he could easily become annoyed if friends did not call him in difficulty or convey good news! Retirement was not on his radar, and he carried on making valuable contributions to international psychiatry right up until his death. Very few of us realised he was unwell, he seemed just as energetic and combative as ever. Later, we discovered that once he learned the prognosis of his condition, he graciously ensured that his many and varied professional responsibilities were handed on to trusted colleagues from the next generation. Hamid has been a role model to many psychiatrists, especially to our friends from overseas. He was acutely aware of his origins as someone who came originally from outside the UK, and always cared deeply for those less fortunate than himself. Troubled about the plight of academic refugees, he became a member of CARA, the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics.

The late Griffith Edwards, his life-long colleague and friend, noted in his citation when Hamid received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 2011, 'Our College is fortunate to have benefitted so greatly for so long from the contributions of this exceptionally gifted man, a leader in the field nationally and internationally.'

He died peacefully at home in Kingston, Surrey, after suffering from carcinoma of the lung. He will be dearly missed by Barbara, to whom he was married for 40 years, and his children, Hossein, Nassrin and Reza, their partners, Catherine, Matze and Nicola, and his grandchildren, Leila, Kiyan, Jonah and Taraneh.

Ilana Crome & David Skuse

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Dr John McCurley



Formerly Psychiatrist and Physician Superintendent

Dr John McCurley, born on 6 September 1937, was a distinguished psychiatrist who spent virtually all of his professional life in the Glasgow area. Born in Possil, a prize-winning procession through primary school and St Mungo's Academy in Glasgow took him to the medical faculty of Glasgow University at the age of 17.

Not only academically gifted, John also immersed himself in the corporate life of the university. He was on the Board of the Student Union, ran the University International Club and, no mean clarinetist himself, founded, and was President of, the University Jazz Club – bear in mind that this was the era of the Clyde Valley Stompers! Graduating MB ChB in 1961, John decided to enter the field of psychiatric medicine, working with Professor Roger at the Southern General, and at Stobhill and Woodilee Hospitals in the city, before a spell at the Maudsley Hospital in London. It was while at Woodilee that he developed what would become a lifelong concern for adolescent psychiatry.

At the age of 30 John returned to Scotland as a consultant at Riccartbar and Dykebar Hospitals, one of the youngest, if not *the* youngest, consultant in Scotland. He remained at Dykebar, where he became Physician Superintendent, until his retirement. In 1972 he gained his Membership of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and was invited to become a Fellow in 1986. His skill as a forensic psychiatrist took him on many occasions to the High Courts where he gave his professional evidence.

In 1990 John McCurley was appointed as a mental welfare commissioner for Scotland. In this role, protecting the interests of the mentally ill and those with restriction orders in force, he travelled all over the country visiting mental hospitals and prisons.

He was an avid follower of many sports, played golf regularly and served for a spell as President of Clydesdale Cricket Club in Glasgow. He retained his love of jazz but added to that a passion for opera. He possessed a massive collection of CDs, mostly operatic.

In 1966 John married Anna Gemmell, a student teacher, who later in her career became the Conservative MP for Renfrew West and Inverclyde. This marriage ended in 1987. They had one daughter, Honor, who aged only 40, died of a brain tumour in 2011. In later years he enjoyed the companionship of Brenda and they were married on 24 June 2012.

John died on 10 January 2013. A man of real ability, with a quirky sense of humour and wide-ranging interests, John McCurley will be well remembered by colleagues, friends and family alike. His funeral was a private affair, at his own request, but his ashes are being taken up to Crieff in Perthshire, where they will be buried in a woodland cemetery within sight of the Grampian Hills.

He is survived by Mavourna, his wee Scottie dog, who gave his so much joy in his final year, and by Brenda and her son Andrew.

Brenda McGilliard

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Dr Peter Kennedy



Formerly Psychiatrist and Health Service Manager

Peter Kennedy was born in Bradford on 31 May 1941. His medical career began at Leeds University, a decision taken almost casually, but which was to have a profound effect on the practice of psychiatry and the management of mental health services in the early 21st century.

Peter began psychiatric training in York in the early 1960s at a time when a series of scandals in large psychiatric hospitals was shaking the National Health Service. He moved on to the Medical Research Council in Edinburgh, where he worked on parasuicide and alcohol misuse and mixed with some of the most significant names in British psychiatry of the 1960s and 1970s. His teaching ability gained respect and recognition from psychiatrists in training and medical students. His published work was enough to gain him consideration for a Chair, but he was thought to be too young at 36, causing him to reassess his priorities, which lay in shaping services to the needs and choices of patients. He returned to mainstream psychiatry as a consultant in York in 1980 at a time when care was moving from hospital to community, developing services centred on patient priorities. In 1985, Peter reduced clinical time and became manager of the mental health unit where he was able to appoint doctors and nurses to provide treatment outside large expensive hospitals and employ resources more efficiently. His particular skill was listening; he recognised the legitimacy of concern about change, leading by example and allowing doubters to experience the benefits that can come from such change. This approach to management is accepted as commonplace now but was innovative when Peter developed it.