

Conclusion

Psychiatrists all around the world have various stakes in controlled medicines. They have an urgent need to be able to prescribe methadone or buprenorphine for the evidence-based treatment of dependence and to use benzodiazepines for various other mental disorders. In collaboration with organisations of other medical specialists, their national associations should advocate improved access to these medicines. Furthermore, they can play a role in monitoring misuse of and dependence on these medicines when prescribing them and in collecting information on the mechanisms behind the diversion and misuse of prescription medicines.

These associations can, together with those of other medical specialties and patients' organisations, assess the situation with regard to controlled medicines in their country by using the recent WHO policy guidelines and the checklist mentioned above. Together they can call on governments to implement policies and legislation aimed at solving any problems identified and can promote attitudes and practices among their members that will help to overcome such problems.

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NEWS AND NOTES

Contributions to the 'News and notes' column should be sent to: Amit Malik MRCPsych, Consultant Psychiatrist, Hampshire Partnership NHS Trust, UK, email ip@rcpsych.ac.uk

College position statement: recommendations for psychiatrists on spirituality and religion

Evidence suggests that the relationship between spirituality/religion and mental health is a positive one, and there may be benefits associated with considering spiritual and religious factors within treatment planning. The Royal College of Psychiatrists' position statement recommends that psychiatrists consider a tactful and sensitive exploration of patients' religious beliefs and spirituality during consultations – but that psychiatrists should also ensure that a patient's lack of religious or spiritual beliefs is equally respected. The statement can be viewed on the College's website (<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/collegereports/positionstatements.aspx>).

Inayat Khan

The World Health Organization has highlighted on its website the achievements of a former member of staff, Dr Inayat Khan, who is also a Fellow of the College (see http://www.who.int/archives/fonds_collections/special/former_staff_history_khan/en/index.html).

Obituary – Professor Tolani Asuni

The College is saddened to announce the death of Professor Tolani Asuni on 21 June 2011 at age 86 in Lagos. Professor Asuni was a Foundation Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and had a long, illustrious professional career in Nigeria at Obufemi Awolowo in Lagos, Ibadan University and the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital Abeokuta. He was one of the founders, and the first President, of the Association

