

## Cultural Psychiatry: A Promising Area for Research and Practice

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### Editorial

Understanding the cultural backgrounds of mental health and illness, in relation to language, religion and spirituality, family structures, life-cycle stages, ceremonial rituals, and customs, along with moral and legal systems, is essential in the field of cultural psychiatry [1]. There have been many important discoveries addressing the association between culture and classification, diagnosis, and treatment of psychiatric disorders [2].

Definitely, culture provides positive social support and resources to individuals from their family or community, all of which promote health, resilience, and well-being for mental state. For instance, in China, one traditional Confucius interpersonal style emphasizing on interpersonal harmony and connection, the Zhongyong thinking (Doctrine of the Mean), was negatively associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms [3]. Moreover, scholars have assessed the cross-cultural, positive constructs by comparing more than 20,000 university students from Germany, Russia, and China. Their results indicated that German students experienced significantly more social support and life satisfaction than Russian and Chinese students did; Russian were more resilient, and Chinese more mentally positive and healthy. This study indicates significant differences in universal happiness variances across cultures [4].

On the other hand, by creating identities and social positions that individuals experience differentially and specifically, including discrimination, racism, and forms of structural violence, culture is a predominant influence in the causation of psychiatric disorders [5]. The cultural influence is emic, and can be traced back to documentations or fictions written many years ago. Bearing this in mind, a group of investigators have studied culture and its related psychiatric disorders in the late imperial China [6]. They selected and voted on the personality-descriptive terms (adjective)/ phrases, and sentences/ paragraphs in a Chinese novel well-reflecting Chinese traditional culture, A Dream of Red Mansions, and compared them with the classification criteria of the contemporary documentation, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder-Version 5 [1]. Many important characters in the novel had impairments in personality functions or traits, some of them may be diagnosed with one or more personality disorders. These psychiatric disorders were largely due to Chinese culture, such as hierarchy, male

dominance, and collectivism, which were influenced by Confucianism.

In psychotherapy, cultural influences are considered both specific and efficient. Scholars have improved psychotherapy techniques by adding cultural competency and efficacy [7]. The softness, personalization, and orderliness of an office might also be regarded as effects on appraisals of its psychotherapist, and these perceptions are used across students' judgments in three countries, i.e., the United States, Turkey, and Vietnam [8].

Psychiatrists now have more cultural awareness and familiarity to treat patients not only in a geographic region, but also in the mixed residents from different cultures influenced by globalization [9]. But cultural psychiatry still offers huge spaces for research and clinical practice, and we have reasons to expect that more cultural-individualized approaches would be available to patients.

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