



In partnership with: PROGRAMME BG07 „PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES“

Thursday, October, 01, 2015

11:00 – 12:30 PANEL DISCUSSION:

MENTAL HEALTH AND STIGMA.

MYTHS AND REALITY – BARRIER TO HEALTH CARE QUALITY.

Moderators: Assoc. Prof. M. Stoimenova, MD, PhD; Assoc. Prof. S. Aleksandrova-Yankulovska, MD, PhD, DSc

Presenters: Assist. Prof. P. Kolarov MD; Assist. Prof. P. Chumpalova, MD; Assist. Prof. G. Georgiev, MD; L. Tumbev, MD; Assoc. Prof. M. Stoimenova, MD, PhD

Summary: Around half the population will experience a mental illness at some stage of their life and about one in five people will experience some form of mental health problem each year. A mental illness is not a character flaw. It is caused by genetic, biological, social and environmental factors.

The prejudice and discrimination of mental illness is as disabling as the illness itself. It undermines people attaining their personal goals and dissuades them from pursuing effective treatments. Many people with serious mental illness are challenged doubly. On one hand, they struggle with the symptoms and disabilities that result from the disease. On the other, they are challenged by the stereotypes and prejudice that result from misconceptions about mental illness. As a result of both, people with mental illness are robbed of the opportunities that define a quality life: good jobs, safe housing, satisfactory health care, and affiliation with a diverse group of people. People with a mental illness are no more violent or dangerous than the rest of the population. People with a mental illness are more likely to harm themselves – or to be harmed – than they are to hurt other people. Having a mental illness does not make the person immune to somatic problems. Receiving a proper care does not only include treating the psychiatric aspect, it should be thorough and start with prophylactics, health promotion, and social assistance. Often the severity of the somatic disease poses a much greater threat to the patient's life than the mental disorder he suffers from. The lack of proper understanding of the nature of the mental illness in vast part in the medical society leads to stigmatization and worsens the quality of medical care.