

A Description Of The Psychiatrist Profession

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Introduction

Medicine is a broad field with many specialized areas. Psychiatry is one field in which a person can major in the fellowship program. Contemporary studies indicate an increase in behavioural and mental health issues. Moreover, research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows an increase in suicide cases among Americans due to trauma and mental health disorders. Therefore, it is essential for individuals to understand that the mind should be treated the same way as any other body part. Psychiatric is an important field since it touches the core of humanity during treatment. Also, the profession offers a variety of specializations, such as forensic psychiatry, to a person pursuing the profession. The paper aims to illustrate the profession of psychiatrists and the issues related to it.

Abstract

The paper reviews the training, work setting, and the issues that relate to a psychiatrist as a mental health professional. First, the paper highlights a brief description of the training required to be a psychiatrist. It recognizes a psychiatrist as a specialist who assesses the physical and mental aspects of psychological problems. In training, a student must earn a bachelor's degree, which takes four years. The student will enrol in a medical school for another four years to attain a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) so that he/she can be a mental health physician. The student will later enrol in psychiatric residency training, which will take a minimum of four years. Then, the student may undergo another two-year training called a fellowship to specialize in a subfield of psychiatry. A psychiatrist can work in different settings, such as mental health institutions, military settings, university medical centres, and hospice programs. Additionally, the paper has highlighted types of counselling issues in psychiatry, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and mental illness. Lastly, the essay explores assessment and intervention in psychiatry. Examples of assessment and intervention are physical examination and electroconvulsive therapy, respectively.

Description Of The Psychiatrist Profession

A medical doctor who treats, diagnoses, and prevents mental illness is called a psychiatrist. They are qualified to assess the physical and mental aspects of psychological problems. An individual will have to specialize in psychiatry after qualifying as a general practitioner. Psychiatry is a speciality area in medicine that deals with the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of behavioural, emotional, and mental disorders. The psychiatrist can understand a patient's mental and physical state by engaging

in discussion with a patient and carrying out various psychological and medical laboratory tests. Their clinical and educational training enables them to evaluate psychological and medical data, diagnose, and develop treatment plans by understanding how the medical illness relates to emotions and the relationship between specific diseases and genes in a family.

Psychiatry Training

Students aspiring to become psychiatrists must first earn a bachelor's degree. A degree from a variety of fields is accepted. Training in a pre-med program at a university or college is optional, but it allows the students to fulfil the necessary prerequisites to gain entry into a medical school. The undergraduate studies expose students to training on how the mind works. The students may go for an internship in a hospital to gain experience that enhances their medical school application. It is mandatory for prospective medical students to pass the Medical College Admission Test, maintain a good GPA, and be proficient in essay writing. Most medical schools consider the Medical College Admission Test score during the admission process.

Students aspiring to be psychiatrists are required to complete four years of training in medical schools to earn a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) in order to become mental health physicians. The psychiatrists undergo training similar to that of other doctors, which focuses on the processes of the mind, disease treatment, and body functions. The initial two years of the training include coursework in biochemistry, psychology, pathology, physiology, and anatomy to build a solid foundation in all medical areas. The last two years involved clinical rotations in clinics and hospitals so that the students could gain hands-on experience. The seasoned staff trains the students on how to care during the rotations. After completion, the students go for psychiatric residency for additional training.

Psychiatric residency allows the physician to develop their skills in addressing the mental health needs of patients and learn how to interact with patients. The training takes a minimum of four years and relates to emotional illness diagnosis and treatment. The training usually takes place in a hospital and is often paid training to shape the experience and education of a psychiatrist. (American Psychiatric Association, n.d.) The practice exposes the psychiatrist to patients with different medical issues as well as treatment and diagnosis of mental health cases in various medical settings such as hospitals and psychiatric wards. The psychiatrist gains experience with different treatment methods, such as deep brain stimulation and psychotherapy. The doctor becomes certified after passing the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology examination after the residency.

The psychiatrists undergo another two-year training called a fellowship to specialize in a subfield of psychiatry. The psychiatrist can concentrate on specific fields such as neuropsychiatry, forensics, addiction, adolescents, children, and personality disorders. Becoming a specialty in psychiatry increases employment opportunities, for instance, the criminal justice system usually hires a forensic psychiatrist.

Work Setting For The Psychiatrist

Psychiatrists work in different settings, such as mental health institutions, military settings, university medical centres, and hospice programs. In the United States, approximately half the population of psychiatrists operate in their private offices. Also, they are employed in rehabilitation centres, psychiatric institutions, and prisons since they have relevant skills in mental illness and behavioural disorders. Psychiatrists do not work in emergency, and primary care units since the psychological disorder are not part of the emergency. Nevertheless, patients are transferred to the psychiatric clinic, or the psychiatrist is requested to go to an emergency department.

Type Of Counseling Issues In Psychiatry

Mental illness: The term usually refers to a variety of diseases that deter the functioning of the mind. Mental illnesses can be characterized as mild, moderate, and severe. There are two leading groups of mental illnesses. The first group is called the non-psychotic illness. Its symptoms include difficulties in coping with life and an overwhelming feeling of anxiety and sadness. Anxiety and depression disorders such as phobia are examples of non-psychotic illnesses. The second group is the psychotic illness, whose symptoms are a distorted view of reality, hallucinations, and delusions. For instance, psychotic diseases are bipolar disorders and schizophrenia. The psychiatrist diagnoses and treats the mental illnesses.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: It is an anxiety disorder that develops when one is exposed to a terrifying ordeal or event which involves the occurrence of grave physical harm. The victim's family members can also develop the disorder. The disorder can occur in individuals of any age. Statistics show that more women experience the disorder than men after exposure to trauma. Anxiety and depressive symptoms constitute the disorder. People with the disorder usually avoid situations that remind them of the accident. The representative attorney of a physically injured individual should determine if his or her client suffers from the disorder through a psychiatric evaluation. The range of vision of injuries the patients obtain is broadened as a result of post-traumatic stress Disorder.

Type Of Assessments And Interventions Used

Assessments: Assessment refers to a situation where a psychiatrist evaluates the likelihood of an individual having a mental disorder and later determines an appropriate treatment protocol. Filling out the questionnaire, taking a physical test, and answering verbal questions are examples of the activities a person undergoes during the assessment. First, a psychiatrist carries out a physical examination since there are other diseases with the same symptoms as mental illness. It is essential because neurological problems or thyroid disorders can be the cause of the observed symptoms. Secondly, the psychiatrist will conduct lab tests during the assessment to rule out physical conditions. Examples of the tests carried out are a brain scan and a urine test. Thirdly, the doctor will evaluate

the personal and mental health history. The questions will revolve around the family history and lifestyle. Moreover, the psychiatrist will want to understand the patient's occupation and the source of stress an individual experiences. Mental and cognitive evaluation is the last stage of assessment.

In the mental evaluation, the psychiatrist asks questions that revolve around behaviours, feelings, and thoughts. The psychiatrist will also ask questions to find out if the patient is shy, aggressive, or irritable. Assessment of the ability of the patient to utilize rational reasoning, recall more straightforward information, and think clearly or logically is carried out during cognitive evaluation. Examples of a task carried out by the patient include providing the solution for simple math problems, recognizing common colours, memorizing the shortlist, and focusing attention.

Interventions used: Intervention refers to the modification of a specific state of the affair through the use of an influencing act or force. Electroconvulsive therapy, psychosocial interventions, and psychotherapy medications are the standard interventions used by the psychiatrist. The first intervention that treats a wide range of emotional difficulties and mental disorders is psychotherapy. Psychotherapy helps the patient to regain his or her normal function by controlling or eliminating the symptoms. The period required to treat the mental disorder using this intervention depends on the extent of the problem. The treatment can take days, weeks, or even months. This intervention can be performed by an individual, a group, or an event for couples. There are different types of psychotherapy. There are available psychotherapies that help an individual solve problems distinctly, evaluate the effect of the experience on the current behaviour, and assist individuals in changing their past behaviour. (World Health Organization, 2021) Conversely, the type of therapy that aims to solve a specific problem is called cognitive behaviour therapy.

Mental disorders and depression that do not respond to other types of intervention are treated best by electroconvulsive therapy. It involves the concentration of a regulated electric shock series to a definite portion of the brain. Despite being controversial, it has been efficient for a specific group of individuals. Electroconvulsive therapy has side effects; thus, it requires a well-trained psychiatrist to conduct the procedure.

Psychosocial treatments assist individuals in recovering from severe trauma through intertwining medication and talk therapy. Also, there is an inclusion of vocational and social training during the treatment. However, the psychosocial intervention also comprises education on the approaches the family can use to take care of the patient and how to manage severe symptoms of the patient.

The medications used to treat diabetic or high blood pressure patients is the same as the ones used by psychiatrists. A psychiatrist gives medical prescriptions for specific mental disorders after completing an assessment and evaluation. Psychiatric medicine aims to restore the normal brain chemistry of an individual. The patient undergoing the medication should often consult the psychiatrist to minimize potential side effects.

Professional Issues In Psychiatry

The increase in legal actions is increasing the concerns about accountability for mental care. Serious errors in care are prevented when physicians take responsibility for understanding and knowing patients who are ethnoculturally diverse. Physicians are held accountable for errors in medication, treatment, assessment, and diagnosis, and more so when the patients suffer harmful and painful consequences. It is important to work with culture consultants if there is limited knowledge of the patient's culture. Most early career psychiatrists do not have adequate knowledge of traditional medications that are effective. For instance, most of them are not trained adequately in treatment using lithium. Therefore, they usually do not use lithium for initial treatment but instead tend to use an antiepileptic as the initial treatment for new bipolar patients.

The transcultural psychiatrist should view society as the patient. Mental services are usually provided to individual patients, and an intra-psychic level is used to locate problems and provide interventions. The transcultural psychiatrist should be in the position of identifying that the patient is also a victim of societal circumstances like marginalization, persecution, oppression, racism, and prejudice victims. There is an ignoring of the social-political determinant as a result of the circumstances being unacknowledged. The individual finds themselves as a victim who is unable to address the same life contexts that are responsible for their conflicts and problems. Therefore, the instance shows that society is the patient that needs treatment. Mental health professionals use social activism to influence and change government officials and policymakers.

Conclusion

An individual requires a minimum of 11 years to become a psychiatrist in the United States. The profession is an integral aspect of various institutions such as prisons, rehabilitation centres, and hospitals. Despite the usefulness of the profession, only a few medical students are willing to specialize in psychiatry. There is a close relationship between the psychologist and the psychiatrist. However, a psychiatrist can diagnose a patient while a psychologist cannot.

References

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