"(Syn)(en)ergizing Global Mental Health and Anthropology"

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This lecture addresses four major challenges for efforts to create synergy between the global mental health movement, cultural psychiatry and anthropology. First, although they appear to share domains of mutual interest, the worlds of global mental health, anthropology and cultural psychiatry have distinct lineages. Expanding their horizons by learning from adjacent disciplines would be mutually beneficial. A second challenge concerns the conceptualization of a new classification system for mental health problems. Adopting a classification system that integrates new insights from socio-neurobiology or neuro-anthropology and from a networks perspective could bring anthropology and global mental health closer and change the way to address the mental health gap, which constitutes the third challenge. The lecture will summarize attempts to achieve comprehensive mental health coverage around the globe and question whether the strategies employed to achieve these goals have been successful, both in high- (HIC) and low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). In LMIC, the dominant strategy needs to be complemented e.g. by mobilization of other community resources including local practitioners. A fourth challenge is the lack of mathematical models to guide action and research and solve major preoccupations such as access to care or multi-level analyses in complex socio-ecological or health systems.

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