

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin AGEM e.V.

Gemeinnütziger Verein (VR Hamburg 1970) – www.agem-ethnomedizin.de – Editor der *Curare* (founded 1978)
Curare. Zeitschrift für Medizinethnologie ▪ ISSN 0344 - 8622 ▪ *Curare*. Journal of Medical Anthropology

- Global Mental Health - Mental health in Africa, Asia and Latin America from an anthropological and cultural psychiatric point of view.

**27th AGEM Conference
Heidelberg, June 27 – 29, 2014**

Call for Papers

Mental health and mental illness result from the complex interaction between biological, psychological, social, economic, and cultural factors. While biological and psychological factors of mental disorders are relatively well researched, much less is known about the economic and cultural factors that may contribute to the disorders.

An estimated half a billion people worldwide suffer from neuropsychiatric disorders such as depression, alcohol or drug addiction, schizophrenia, dementia, or epilepsy among other neurological or psychiatric disorders. More than 80% of people with neuropsychiatric disorders are living in low or middle income countries (LAMIC), mainly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Factors such as unemployment, limited educational opportunities, natural disasters, poverty, malnutrition, the rapid change of traditional structures, and diseases such as HIV/AIDS threaten the mental health of many people. Most mentally ill patients do not receive proper treatment and many are stigmatized and socially excluded due to cultural prejudices. In many cases, essential human rights are ignored or even denied.

Neuropsychiatric disorders have long been neglected by the health sector. In 2001, however, the WHO's World Health Report "Mental Health" emphasised the importance of mental health as a development issue in countries with low and middle incomes, and provided compelling evidence that people with mental disorders constitute a vulnerable group who require development assistance. In 2007 and 2011 the medical journal *Lancet* published a series of articles on "Global Mental Health," however none of the reports stressed anthropological issues.

At the 27th AGEM conference we want to focus on the anthropological and cultural psychiatric issues regarding mental health and illness of people who live in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We want to discuss diagnostic issues, treatment options, and factors influencing mental health and illness including: rapid urbanization with the formation of megacities, population growth, increasing life expectancy and associated demographic changes, unemployment, and poverty.

Natural disasters and armed conflicts can lead to acute and often sequential traumatization. Stigma, discrimination, and the exclusion of mentally ill people in varying communities lead to "social death" as Arthur Kleinman calls it. Traditional healers play an important role in Africa, Asia and Latin America both in diagnosis and in treatment of mental disorders. As there is no health insurance in most of the LAMICs, the ill person's family usually serves as the caregiver and assumes the burdens of that role.

With "Global Mental Health" we want to continue the discourse that began at the 26th AGEM conference in St. Augustine and advance it toward the more general postulate of "Global Health," that is, defining the concept as it exists somewhere between real and utopian perspectives. With this meeting we want to look explicitly at the situation outside of Europe, since there are a number of forums that deal with transcultural issues within Europe.

You are invited to submit presentations for the conference. We especially encourage our younger colleagues from various disciplines such as anthropology, medicine, psychology, psychiatry, and public health, or those who are working in the interdisciplinary field of anthropology and medicine to present research.

Organizational details:

Language: German and English

Venue: Hauptstrasse 235, Völkermuseum, D-69127 Heidelberg

Notes: There are no parallel events. There is no funding provided.

Deadline for abstracts: April 10, 2014

Abstract length: approximately 200-250 words

Presentation length: 45 minutes including discussion

Conference Fee: € 40 non-members, 30 € AGEM-members, 15 € students. Organizational details can be found at: www.agem-ethnomedizin.de

Contact: Ekkehard Schröder (Potsdam): ee.schroeder@t-online.de or info@agem-ethnomedizin.de

Best regards,

Wolfgang Krahl (Chairman AGEM)

Ekkehard Schröder (Editor Curare, media)

Chairman: Dr. med Wolfgang Krahl drwkrahl@yahoo.de • **Vice-Chair:** Ekkehard Schröder
Post-address (Office): AGEM / Red. Curare, c/o Ekkehard Schröder, Spindelstrasse 3, D-14482 Potsdam
info@agem-ethnomedizin.de Tel: 0331 - 7044 681 • Fax: 0331 - 7044 682 ee.schroeder@t-online.de
Treasurer: David Brinkmann, M.A. (Bonn) boni.brink@gmx.de

Publisher: VWB (Vlg. für Wissenschaft u. Bildung) A. Aglaster, Pf. 110368, 10833 Berlin www.vwb-verlag.com

AGEM Advisory Board: Ludger Albers, Wiesbaden – Wolfgang Bichmann, Frankfurt – Claus Deimel, Leipzig
Katarina Greifeld, Frankfurt – Eckhardt Koch, Marburg – William Sax, Heidelberg – Eberhard Wolff, Basel