



WELCOME BACK, COMMUNITY MEMBERS!

Thank you for your continued support of the UMass Psychotic Disorders Clinical and Research Program. The Central Massachusetts Psychosis Network was developed to create a more inclusive community among patients, family members, mental health advocates, local organizations, and providers within the Greater Worcester Area. Over the past year, we have shared groundbreaking research, local services, various events, and connected over 300 community members. We hope that this network will continue to serve as a catalyst to promote collaboration among all of the Central Massachusetts community.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Featuring...

As a part of the Community Engagement and Intervention Initiative, the UMass Psychotic Disorders Clinical and Research Program will be holding a *Lifestyle as Medicine* community event. Many people living with severe mental illness (SMI) suffer from obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, partly due to a lack of education regarding nutrition and exercise. Additionally, due to the health disparity in this population, these individuals do not have the same level of access to care compared to the general population, and may not receive proper treatment for their medical issues. This community event is designed to promote healthy lifestyles for individuals living with severe mental illnesses and improve the health disparity in this population.

For more information, please contact Dr. Radhika Natarajan at radhika.natarajan@umassmed.edu.

Lifestyle as Medicine Community Event

Wednesday June 13th, 2-5PM
Tower Hill Botanic Garden

Individuals who suffer from mental illness are at an increased risk for obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Promoting healthy lifestyle is an important strategy to improve general health.

Come join us for:

- A live cooking demonstration featuring Chef Kevin Williams from Roots restaurant
- A lecture by a UMass nutritionist
- Walking group through the beautiful botanic garden

Organized by:

In Partnership with:

- Roots Natural Foods Restaurant
- Tower Hill Botanic Garden
- UMass Department of Clinical Nutrition
- Community Healthlink

INSPIRATIONAL STORY

Creativity Takes Courage contributed by Sindhu Kosuru

Artistic expression has been long known to serve as an outlet for those suffering from mental illness. Therefore, the UMass Psychotic Disorders Clinical and Research Program, in partnership with major local health organizations, patient and family groups and local artists, has developed Arts and Music module of the Community Engagement and Intervention Initiative. As part of this particular initiative, we hosted a paint night on Friday, May 18th, at a supported residential facility in the Worcester area for individuals with severe mental illness. Members of this facility, all of whom had been living with some form of psychosis, attended this event instructed by Shaun Cannon, founder of the Pronoia Art Alliance.



The Arts and Music initiative aims to instill hope in clients with severe mental illness and forge an avenue for expression through which individuals can channel their emotions. Participants are encouraged to find meaning and express themselves through their artwork. During the paint event, one individual, who painted an abstract piece using a variety of colors, said her color choices held symbolic value, as each color represented a different medication she takes. Another individual, who had initial reservations prior to attending the paint night, was glad she engaged in this event, as she learned how to illustrate her life's journey through her artwork. She was additionally thrilled she got the opportunity to interact with members of the Arts and Music initiative, who had inspired her to paint an emotionally provoking piece. The paint night received unanimous approval from everyone involved, as many of the participants discovered that art can be a positive creative outlet and sought to adopt painting as a new pastime. We hope to hold similar events to integrate art into the lives of individuals living with severe mental illness.

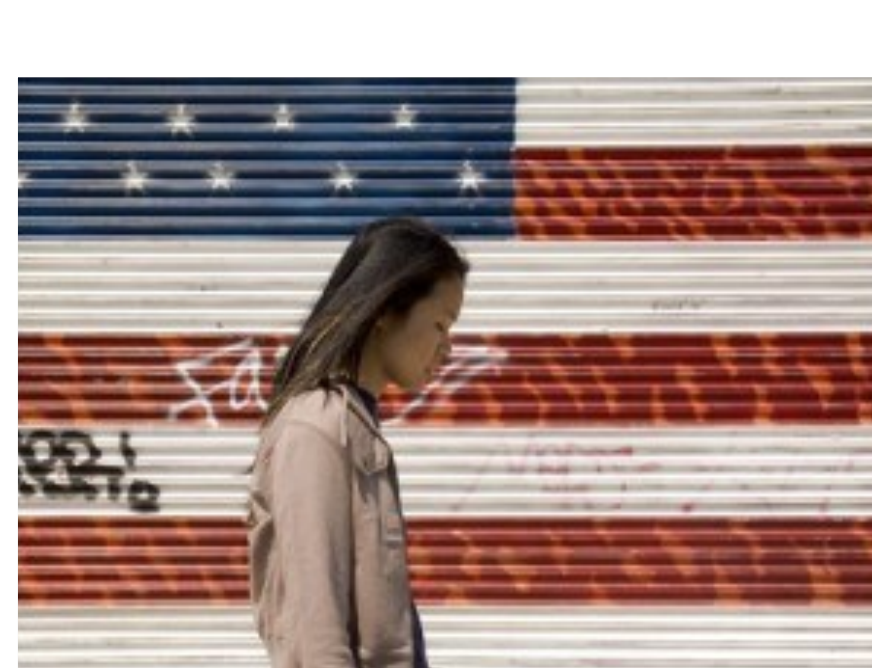


IN THE NEWS

Racial Disparity in Mental Healthcare between White and Asian American Patients contributed by Sindhu Kosuru

Asian Americans are the fastest growing minority group in the United States, currently accounting for approximately 5.6% of the population. However, a recent study published in *Asian Journal of Psychiatry* led by Xiaoduo Fan M.D., M.P.H., director of the UMass Psychotic Disorders Program and director of the UMass China Mental Health Program, indicates a stark discrepancy observed between Asian American and White patients regarding diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders. This study found that the percentage of White patients diagnosed with mental illness, 18.1%, is more than twice that of Asian American patients, 8.6%. Dr. Fan does not attribute this disparity to a lesser prevalence of mental illness in the Asian American population. Rather, he points to cultural barriers and mental health stigma as major determinants for the lack of recognition and usage of mental health services in Asian American communities.

Emotion control, family image, and honor, all values central to Asian American culture, engender a stigma surrounding mental illness. These values, rooted in Confucian ideologies and collectivist attitudes, often discourage Asian Americans from sharing emotions and psychological experiences, and especially from seeking counseling and other mental health services. Additionally, there remains a skepticism among Asian American populations, of western medicine and methods of treatment. Therefore, Dr. Fan proposes the implementation of culturally specific educational programs, intended to explain both the biological and social causes of mental illness, as the most strategic way to reduce stigma of mental illness and increase utilization of mental health resources in the Asian American community.



Dr. Fan recently spoke with NPR/WGBH news station about this study. Click [here](#) to read or watch the full interview.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

With our clinical work, education programs and world-class research on the nature and causes of mental illness – from addiction and schizophrenia to autism spectrum disorders – the UMass Department of Psychiatry is helping individuals and families transform their lives. We are proud of our accomplishments and pleased to be a part of the nationally ranked University of Massachusetts Medical School and UMass Memorial Health Care system.

The UMass Psychotic Disorders Program in the Department of Psychiatry is looking to hire highly motivated and ambitious individuals with clinical trial research experience to run and manage the day-to-day operations of short term and multi-year research projects. The goal of our program is to develop innovative intervention strategies combining pharmacological and psychosocial approaches to treat schizophrenia symptoms, medical co-morbidity and co-occurring substance use, and ultimately to improve the quality of life in this patient population.

For more information about our job opportunities, please click [here](#)

The Central Massachusetts Psychosis Network aims to create a community space to build knowledge, develop skills, and share resources regarding psychosis, schizophrenia and severe mental illness. Please share with us your novel ideas, useful resources, upcoming events, research updates and inspiring stories. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining the network or if you prefer not to be part of the network, please let us know. You may reach us by phone at 508-856-MIND (6463) or by e-mail at mind@umassmed.edu. This network was developed by the UMass Psychotic Disorders Clinical and Research Program, which includes four major components: clinical care, research, community outreach, and global initiatives. To learn more about us, click [here](#). Like our [Facebook page](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#)!