



Indian Medical Association (IMA), The Live Love Laugh Foundation (TLLLF) and Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS) to educate the medical community on depression

To organize a Continuing Medical Education seminar in Delhi on Sunday to mark the upcoming World Mental Health Awareness Day on October 10

New Delhi, October 8, 2016: Addressing the need to reduce the increasing burden of mental health disorders such as depression on the Indian healthcare system, IMA, IPS and TLLLF will organize a one-of-its-kind Continuing Medical Education seminar for doctors on Sunday, (Oct 9, 2016) in Delhi.

This CME is a part of the *'Together Against Depression'* program launched by The Live Love Laugh Foundation (TLLLF), a not-for-profit organization started by actress Deepika Padukone with an aim to raise awareness about mental health in India. The purpose of the seminar is to sensitize and assist doctors in working more effectively with their patients who may be going through depression or anxiety.

The Indian government estimates that 6-7% of the country's population lives with major to minor mental health concerns. This amounts to approximately 70 million Indians, with the number increasing every year. Despite the large number of people who require mental health attention, India has only 3,500 trained psychiatrists and even fewer psychologists. What's worse is that the stigma and discrimination faced by these people and their families prevent them from seeking guidance.

"A General Practitioner (GP) is the first point of contact for a patient and must be sensitized on ways in which they can diagnose signs of depression amongst patients and help them seek appropriate care. This program is in line with the MCI's (Medical Council of India) new guidelines that state that 10% of all medical education programs should focus on mental health. We hope that through this initiative, we can help raise mass awareness about important health issues impacting the overall population and the criticality of prevention, timely diagnosis and treatment", said **Padma Shri Awardee Dr KK Aggarwal - President Elect IMA & President HCFI.**

"There is a need to increase resources – human and financial – for mental health in our country. Owing to the associated stigma as well as the shortage of trained medical practitioners in our country, a majority of patients continue to suffer in silence. Since its inception last year, The Live Love Laugh Foundation has been committed to developing outreach programs to highlight the urgent and massive mental health challenges that India faces. We are happy to be hosting this seminar with the support of the Indian Medical Association and the Indian



Psychiatric Society. We believe that sensitizing medical practitioners constitutes a major part of the multi-pronged battle that's needed to fight depression," said **Dr. Shyam Bhat, Member of the Board of Trustees, TLLLF.**

“In our country, depression is underdiagnosed and not recognized even by our doctors. However, it should be known that depression is a treatable disease and more and more people must be encouraged to seek help in time. Given the shortage of psychiatrists and counselors in our country, GP sensitization is essential. We are hopeful that through these CMEs being organized in partnership with IMA & TLLLF, we will be able to better equip practicing doctors with the awareness and resources needed to be able to help their patients. The IPS is focused on positive mental health and in stigma reduction not only for depression but also across the spectrum for all psychiatric disorders” said **Dr. G Prasad Rao, President, Indian Psychiatric Society.**

Our country is home to one of the smallest per capita base of mental health professionals globally. This becomes apparent through the following WHO statistics: For every 100,000 people in India, the base of resources for mental health is abysmally small - just 0.3 psychiatrists, 0.07 psychologists, 0.07 social workers, 0.12 nurses. Moreover, there are only 2.1 hospital beds for every 1,00,000 population. This adds up to a huge burden of mental disorders – 2,443 disability-adjusted life years per 1,00,000 population¹. These statistics are shocking and reflect the fact that India is grappling with one of the highest burden for mental health disease in the world.

The need of the hour is to arm doctors with the resources required to help patients receive appropriate medical attention and treatment and the CME in Delhi is a step in this direction.

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¹ <http://www.firstpost.com/india/india-needs-to-develop-a-strategy-for-training-human-resources-for-mental-healthcare-3001840.html>