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IACAPAP 2020 World Congress to explore child & adolescent mental health

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Over 300 industry and academic experts sharing research findings and clinical observations through a virtual conference from 2 to 4 December 2020



For the first time in its 83-year history, the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (IACAPAP) is holding its biennial congress on the virtual platform.

Originally slated to take place in Singapore, the 24th edition of the child and adolescent mental health association's congress will now take place virtually from 2 -- 4 December 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over 300 industry and academic experts will be making more than 200 presentations stretching over 180 hours on the latest research and trends in child and adolescent psychiatry.

"We have themed the congress "Starting from the beginning -- laying the foundation for lifelong mental health" to reflect the importance of early intervention in the child and adolescent stages for better mental health over a lifetime," says Adj Associate Professor Say How ONG, Chairman of the IACAPAP 2020 World Congress, and Chief & Senior Consultant, Department of Developmental Psychiatry at the Institute of Mental Health.

"Children are the pillars of our future and deserve our attention and investments so that they can lead healthy lives and contribute meaningfully. Given that the onset of mental health conditions commonly occurs in adolescence; and that adverse childhood experiences add to the risks of our children developing mental disorders later in their lives, it is important that we identify them and intervene as early as possible. This will help them set a foundation from which they develop skills to handle the mental health problems or reduce the debilitating effects of mental disorders that they may encounter later in life," he adds.

Highlights of IACAPAP 2020

The Congress' Keynote and Plenaries will discuss ways to improve the practice of child and adolescent mental health.

Delivering the Keynote is **Professor Michael Meaney**, known for his extensive research into the interactions of genes and environment on brain function. He is director of the Translational Neuroscience programme at the Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences, Professor of Paediatrics at the National University of Singapore, and a James McGill Professor of Medicine at McGill University. In his Keynote titled **"Developmental Processes & Epigenetics"**, he will speak of ways in which we can integrate our current knowledge in biological sciences to identify those children exposed to environmental conditions that predict a risk, or susceptibility to mental disorders.

Plenary speaker **Dr James Hudziak** will speak on "Building healthy brains through promoting healthy families", with focus on the neuroscience of how stress impacts on the structure of the developing brain and how helping the family can improve the environment and children's ability to deal with stress in their lives and help build a healthy brain.

Professor Michael Hong, a pioneer of child psychiatry in South Korea, will discuss the clinical implications of cultural differences in his Plenary **"Clinical implications of the East-West cultural differences in Asian countries; does it really matter?"**.

"Emotionally dysregulated children: who are they, what happens to them, and what can we do about them" is a Plenary topic by **Dr Gabrielle Carlson**, who has written over 275 papers and chapters on phenomenology and treatment of child and adolescent depression and bipolar disorder.

Professor Valsamma Eapen is Chair of Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at UNSW Sydney, Head of the Academic Unit of Child Psychiatry South West Sydney (AUCS), and Director of BestSTART South West Sydney child health unit. Her Plenary "**Early life determinants of health**" discusses the importance of investment in early life determinants of health in order to break the cycle of long-term and intergenerational disadvantage. With a special focus on neurodevelopmental and behavioural disorders of childhood.

Dr Daniel Fung, President of the IACAPAP and Chairman of Medical Board at the Institute of Mental Health will wrap up the Congress with the Gerald Caplan Lecture. His topic, **"Starting small: developing child centric mental health policies".**