

World Health Assembly on holistic care approach

27 May 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: World Health Organization is looking forward to integrate holistic patient care in global healthcare system by incorporating palliative care, enhanced support to autistic patients and those with disabilities, implementing traditional medicine and raising awareness of psoriasis, indicated during World Health Assembly concluded on May 24 in Geneva.

Traditional medicine

Health Assembly approved WHO's traditional medicine strategy 2014-2023. Traditional medicine covers a wide variety of therapies and practices which vary from country to country and region to region. The strategy aims to build the knowledge base for national policies and strengthen quality assurance, safety, proper use and effectiveness of traditional and complementary medicine through regulation. It also aims to promote universal health coverage by integrating traditional and complementary medicine services into health care service delivery and home care.

Disability action plan

A new WHO global disability action plan 2014-2021 aims to improve the health and quality of life of the one billion people around the world with disabilities by improving their access to health care and creating new and strengthening existing services and technologies that help them acquire or restore skills and functions. It also aims to strengthen data and research.

Autism spectrum disorders

The Health Assembly urged Member States to include the needs of individuals affected by autism spectrum and other developmental disorders in policies and programmes related to child and adolescent health and development and mental health. This means increasing the capacity of health and social care systems to provide services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and for their families and shifting the focus of care from long-stay health facilities towards non-residential services in the community. It also means improving health surveillance systems to capture data on autism spectrum disorders and ensuring countries are better able to diagnose and treat autism spectrum disorders.

The resolution highlights the need for the WHO Secretariat to help strengthen countries' capacities to address autism spectrum and other developmental disorders; facilitate resource mobilization; engage with autism-related networks; and monitor progress. All efforts will be conducted in alignment with the WHO Mental health action plan 2013-2020.

Autism spectrum disorders comprise a range of development disorders which include autism, childhood disintegrative disorder and Asperger syndrome. Worldwide, most people with autism spectrum disorders and their families do not receive any care from health and social care systems.

Psoriasis

A resolution on psoriasis encourages member awareness to raise awareness about the disease and to advocate against the stigma experienced by so many people who suffer from it.

Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory disease characterised by scaly, red skin lesions. People with psoriasis have relatively higher risks of heart disease, stroke, hypertension and diabetes. Studies have documented higher rates of depression and anxiety compared with the general population.

Palliative care

The Assembly emphasizes the need for palliative care services to grow because of the rising prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and the ageing of populations everywhere. The WHO global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013-2020, endorsed by the Health Assembly in May 2013, includes palliative care among the policy options proposed to member states and in its global monitoring framework.