

Institute of Mental Health Commemorates WHO Mental Health Year **2001**

*By Dr Lee Cheng, Psychiatrist,
Chairman, IMH World Health Day
2001 Organising Committee*

The World Health Organisation (WHO) focuses on Mental Health as its theme on World Health Day which falls on 7 April this year. This focus on mental health is in recognition of the burden that mental and brain disorders pose on people and their families. The World Health Day marks the first of many WHO activities that will highlight mental health issues throughout this year.

No other illness raises as much barriers and suffers as much stigma as mental illness. It affects every facet of the sufferer's life – from family and social relationships, to education and occupation opportunities. The impact of

mental illness in terms of psychological, economic and social terms is very high. Despite the advances in treatment of mental diseases, many people continue to be unaware that effective treatments for mental illness exist.

The WHO's aim for year 2001 is to reduce the prevalence of untreated mental health disorders. It also hopes to address the pervasive effects of social exclusion resulting from stigma and discrimination of psychiatric patients will help those afflicted and their families to lead better and more productive lives. It would also encourage those in need to seek treatment. Thus,

the slogan for this year is "Stop exclusion-dare to care."

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) will be organising two events to commemorate World Health Day viz. a Forum on 'Work, Family and Mental Health' on 7 April and an Open House in IMH on 8 April 2001. Throughout the year, IMH will continue to work with other professional bodies and voluntary associations to organise talks and seminars as a commitment to highlight the importance of good mental health among the public at large. We hope that all doctors in Singapore would support the cause by participating actively in these activities. ■

FORUM ON: 'WORK, FAMILY
AND MENTAL HEALTH',
co-organised with

Health Promotion Board

Guest of Honour: Minister for Health, Mr Lim Hng Kiang

Venue: Sheraton Towers Singapore

Date: 7 April 2001 (Saturday)

Time: 2pm to 5pm

(a) Stress and Health

English: A/P Leslie Lim, Adjunct Associate Professor, IMH

Mandarin: Dr Ng Beng Yeong, Consultant Psychiatrist, IMH

(b) Coping with Family Conflicts

English: Ms Vivienne Ng, Deputy Head, Psychological Services Unit, Ministry of Community Development and Sports

Mandarin: Dr Yeo Seem Huat, Private Psychiatrist, Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre

(c) Coping with Work Stress

English: Dr Ken Ung, Consultant Psychiatrist, Department of Psychological Medicine, NUH

Mandarin: Mr Christopher Choo, Senior Psychologist, Department of Psychology, IMH

IMH OPEN HOUSE

Date: 8 April 2001 (Sunday)

Time: 9am to 1pm

The aim of the Open House is to increase public awareness of mental health issues and to erase the stigma and discrimination towards seeking psychiatric help. It will focus on physical health in relation to mental health. There will be a school band performance, a food-fair on eating healthy food, a magic show, an arts exhibition showcasing the works of our patients and a drawing competition for primary school children.

There will also be talks on quitting alcohol and smoking together with a demonstration of relaxation techniques.