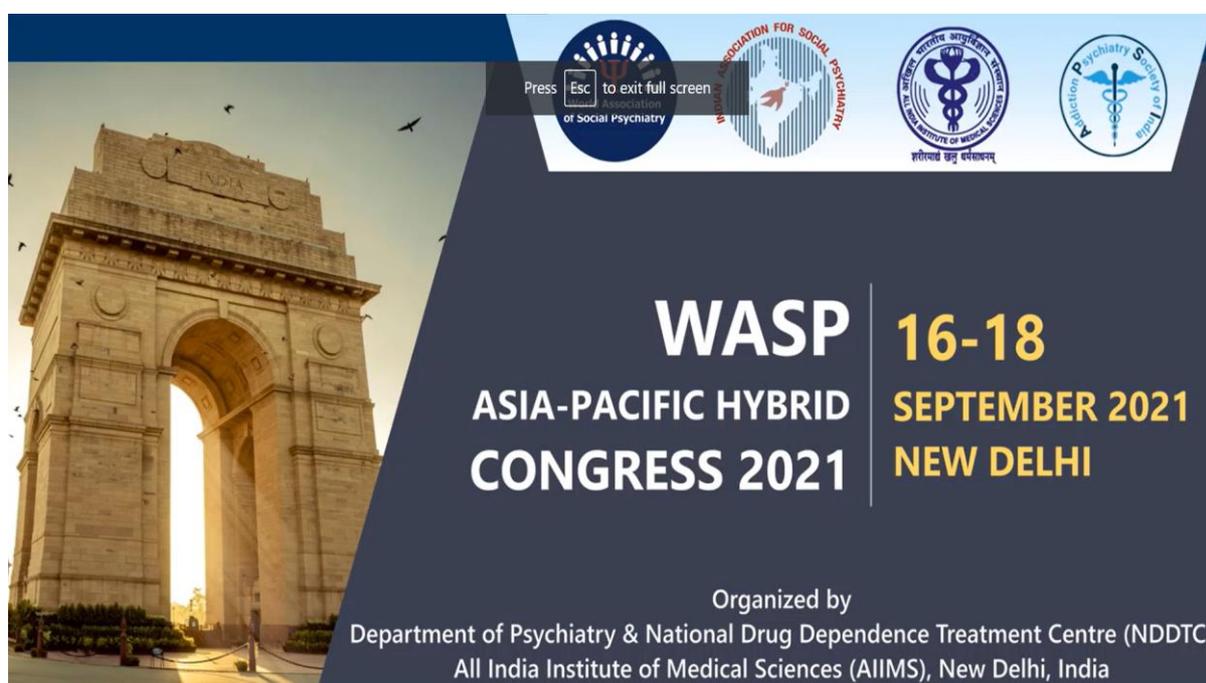

SUMMARY REPORT: WASP ASIA PACIFIC HYBRID CONGRESS 2021

By: **WASP Scientific Committee, AIIMS**

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I am pleased to present the summary report of the WASP Asia Pacific Hybrid Congress, 2021.



The banner features a photograph of the India Gate in New Delhi on the left. On the right, there is a dark blue background with white and yellow text. At the top right, there are four logos: the Association of Social Psychiatry, the Indian Association for Social Psychiatry, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), and the Association of Psychiatrists of India. The main text reads: 'WASP ASIA-PACIFIC HYBRID CONGRESS 2021' in white, and '16-18 SEPTEMBER 2021 NEW DELHI' in yellow. Below this, it says 'Organized by Department of Psychiatry & National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, India'.

The WASP Asia Pacific Hybrid Congress 2021 hosted by the Department of Psychiatry and National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre New Delhi, was conducted from 16 to 18 September 2021. The congress was attended by 714 registered participants from 30 countries of the world. The largest international contingent was from USA (21 participants) followed by UK (9 participants). 631 participants from India attended the conference representing the various states and union territories of the country. About 100 participants attended the congress in physical mode as well.



The chief guest of the inauguration programme was Prof. PC Joshi, Vice Chancellor, University of Delhi. The other dignitaries on the dais included Prof. Randeep Guleria, Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi; Prof. Rakesh Chadda; Chair of the Organising Committee; Prof. Pratap Sharan, President Indian Association of Social Psychiatry; Prof Roy Abraham Kallivayalil, Past President, WASP; and Prof. Vincenzo Di Nicola, President Elect, WASP. In their address, the dignitaries acknowledged the role of various social factors on the human development as well as genesis and manifestation of mental health. They felt that the COVID-19 pandemic has stressed the importance of social psychiatry and the need to find newer ways of dealing with the problems that we are facing currently. In the light of this, it was felt that the theme 'Innovations in social psychiatry' has been aptly chosen for this congress. The dignitaries also appreciated the Department of Psychiatry and NDDTC in organizing the conference in these trying times.



The scientific content of the programme comprised of plenary sessions, symposia, oral and poster presentations. To accommodate the huge response received to the call for papers, the congress had to organize 9 concurrent parallel sessions. There were 15 plenary speakers, who spoke on variety of topics such as the guru chela relationship, financial empowerment of mentally ill, public mental health consequence of COVID-19, innovations in social psychiatry, student wellness, recovery in mental illness, learnings from ancient India, and others. There were also 4 invited lectures from experts in the field, who spoke on important issues such as engaging communities for mental health, and online school curriculum in COVID-19.



The conference had 90 symposia covering different aspects of psychiatry. Some important areas that were covered in the symposia included – use of online mode to impart mental health training to different service providers, including undergraduate and postgraduate teaching; use of telepsychiatry in addressing mental health issues during COVID-19; impact of COVID-19 on the mental health in different population

groups, including migrants, homeless population, and even caregivers; innovations in community service delivery mechanism to address mental health problems; challenges in training and conducting research during COVID-19; innovations in the field of addiction psychiatry; and many other topics. One of the symposia also involved a debate between two stalwarts in psychiatry on whether suicides are a societal problem, rather than a mental health problem, which made for interesting listening.



There were interesting topics covered in the oral and poster presentations as well. The congress had 77 oral communications and 58 poster presentations. The congress also had a competition for 'best oral' and 'best poster' presentation. Those presenters whose papers were shortlisted for consideration under these categories earlier were asked to present their findings with judges scoring their paper and presentations. There were three oral communications and four poster communications shortlisted for presentation. There was also a session for early career psychiatrists at the beginning of the congress.

Overall, the WASP Asia Pacific Hybrid Congress conducted in trying times as this, can be deemed to be very successful with huge participation from different and diverse countries. The congress provided an ideal platform for exchange of ideas, sharing of concerns and discussing newer ideas for implementation that would help in alleviating mental health problems. It is hoped that the new relationships forged during the congress would foster newer collaborations and generate newer areas of research in the area of social psychiatry.

May we together come out of this pandemic unscathed in our body and in mind. Wishing all safe times ahead!

Thank you!

