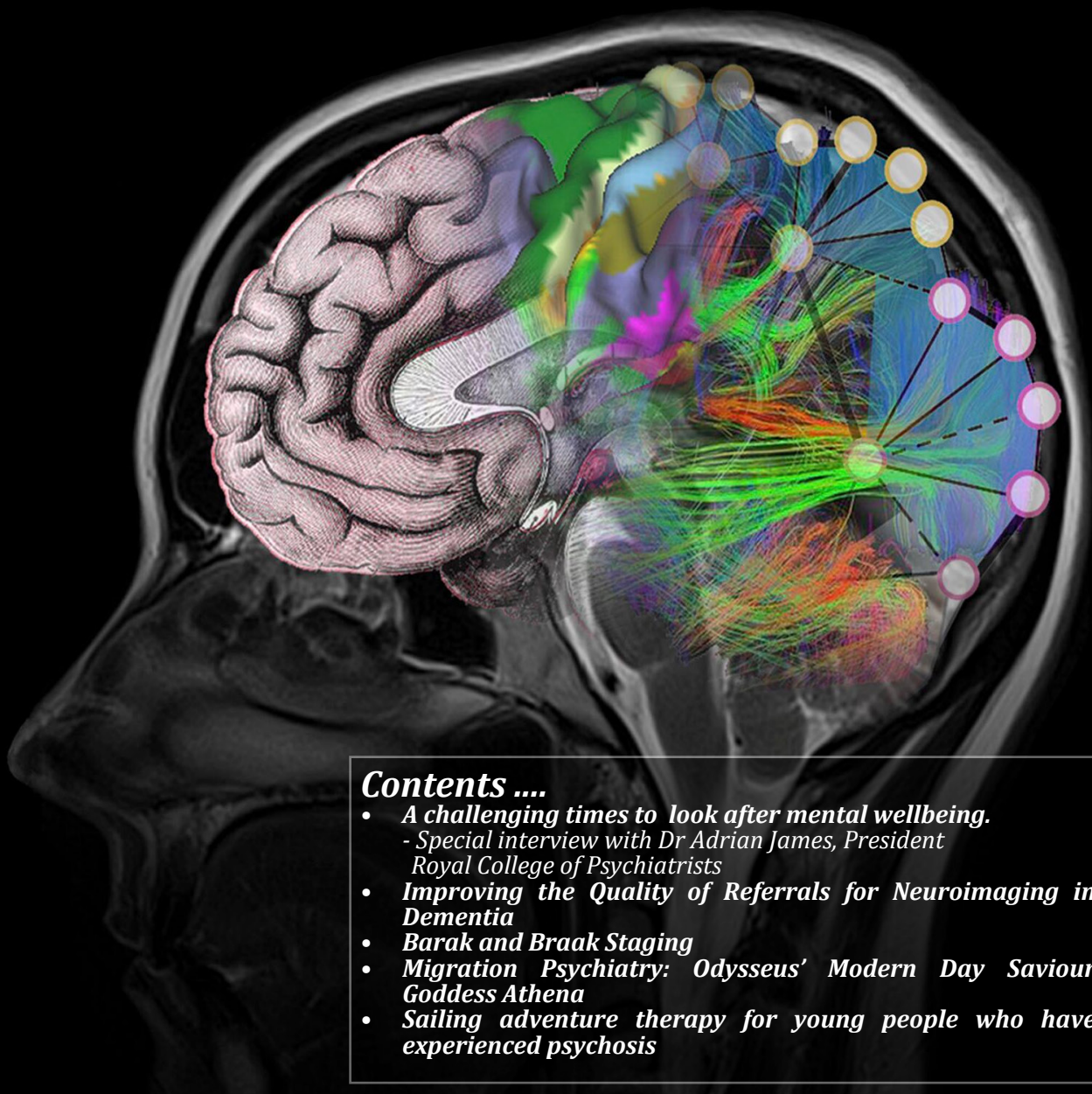


# Swasthya *Health* स्वास्थ्य

## MENTAL HEALTH

Swasthya: Journal for Healthcare Professionals



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## Swasthya Mental Health

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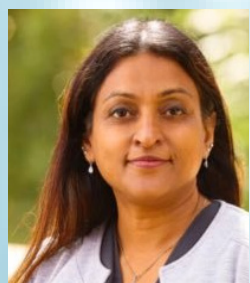
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A warm welcome readers of Swasthya health journal, mental health section of spring issue of 2021-22. Covid-19, has continued to dominate scientific discussions over the last 6 months. Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown measures highlighted a tsunami of mental health concerns in previously mentally healthy population with increase in anxiety, depression, precipitated by prolonged social isolation, loneliness along with social life events such as unemployment, debt associated resulting in excessive use of alcohol, increased incidence of domestic violence in adults. The pandemic is also adversely affecting those with pre-existent severe and enduring mental health conditions with disrupted mental health services, limited face to face consultations and difficulty in accessing services to those with limited knowledge of digital technology. In the last year several mental health services in U.K. reported 2-3 fold increase in referrals, creating a burgeoning demand for on-line psychiatric consultations and heralded change in how mental health services are delivered during the pandemic. In U.K. prompt roll out of vaccination programme nationally since December 2020 and reinforcement of public health strategies such as social distancing, measures played a key part in limiting the spread of virus. Omicron variant though, kept everyone on their toes in the latter part of 2021 but it is now tailing off. We have seen increase in sickness/absence amongst health care staff in NHS and symptoms of long covid who have not been able to return to work. So with easing of lockdown restrictions and discontinuation of mandatory lateral flow test since late February 2022 there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists, with its London Headquarters is a leading mental health charity in U.K. It is a global leader in mental health with nearly 20,000 members worldwide. It has led education, set standards in psychiatry training and campaigned for increased resources for mental health. Under the able leadership of its dynamic President, Dr Adrian James, it was quick to adopt a digital approach to its working and was influential in increasing public awareness of mental health issues during the pandemic. It is not often that one is able to interview a President of a Royal Medical College. I was privileged to meet the unassuming, down to earth and friendly Dr James in early 2022 and interview him regarding current issues facing mental health and role of the College during the pandemic. Dr James's interview is a special feature of mental health section of this issue.

In keeping with Swasthya's focus on Innovation we are delighted to include a group of three interesting articles. Dr Dalvi, a leading Old Age Psychiatrist in U.K., has developed a pioneering multi-disciplinary service involving Nuclear Medicine, Radiology and Psychiatry in early diagnosis of Dementia in elderly in Kent. In someone complaining of memory problem a request for Brain imaging from referring clinicians is frequent. However, do all such patients need brain imaging and how does one identify those with greatest need for imaging, what information is helpful in such referrals is elucidated succinctly in an audit carried out by Dr Dalvi and colleagues. The same author has been kind enough to submit an illustration regarding Braak & Braak's staging of Alzheimer's dementia progression stage I-VI. Braak & Braak propose neuropathological evidence for progression of neuron to neuron spread of the neurofibrillary tangles in Alzheimer's dementia. It is of clinical relevance as the staging co-relates to cognitive decline and anti-dementia drugs are more effective if prescribed early in the disease spread. We hope that readers would find this new scientific information interesting.

Dr Anis Ahmed, a Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist based in Birmingham is also chair of Volunteering & International Division of Royal College of Psychiatrists. Dr Ahmed's article alludes to "Ulysses syndrome" or "Odysseus syndrome" named after an ancient Greek King of Ithaca, Odysseus and his long journey, hardship in Trojan war and battle with monsters akin to the difficulties encountered by modern day refugees and asylum seekers. The article discusses the complex issue of mental health aftermath of forced migration of displaced populations, refugees and asylum seekers particularly highlighting.

The last article in the section is an offbeat but interesting one by Dr Mike Jackson, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist in North Wales. Dr Jackson highlights "voyage to recovery 2021 project" regarding sailing as a therapy for those recovering from first episode of psychosis. Dr Jackson has discussed the advantages of how voyage helps develop social connectedness in young individuals and keeps them away from illicit drugs and form meaningful relationships.

We hope you find this section interesting and enjoyable.

Best wishes

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