Quality of Life in Chronic Mental Illnesses: Exploring New Frontiers—by Abhishek Pathak, Krishna Prasad Muliya, Jagadiha Thirthalli, Santosh Kumar Chaturvedi (Editors). NIMHANS Publications, Bengaluru, 2016. 220 pp, 400. ISBN 978-81-8646468-00-5

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Psychiatry is gradually expanding its horizons and moving towards a more humanistic treatment approach with quality of life taking over symptom improvement as treatment outcome. While decades have passed since quality of life has been studied in the context of chronic mental illness; researchers continue to debate on its exact definition and conceptualization. It still remains debatable as to what is the core of quality of life: hedonic well being or patient functioning. There are also differing views towards adopting subjective measurement or to include objective measures also while making assessment of quality of life in the context of mental illness.

Written by pioneers of rehabilitation psychiatry in India, experts from Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, NIMHANS this is treatise on quality of life in chronic mental illnesses. Released on the occasion of Workshop on Quality of Life on 30th Jan 2016, this is the first Indian book on this topic. The book systematically captures quality of life research in various mental illnesses. Meant for psychiatrists, psychologists and other mental health professionals, the book gives insight about quality of life as a construct, issues regarding difficulties during assessment, fallacies in measurement and practical suggestions about measuring quality of life across the spectrum of psychiatric diagnoses.

The book is set in four sections: the first section discusses the concept of quality of life in mental illness, its determinants and interplay with culture in the Indian context. Second section is on measurement of quality of life in mental illness with discussion of affective fallacy,

cognitive fallacy and reality distortion fallacies. The third section addresses measurement of quality of life in various psychiatric disorders. In addition to chronic mental disorders, the authors have made a laudable attempt to describe quality of life in childhood psychiatric disorders and geriatric populations with dementias. My personal favorite is the chapter on quality of life and women mental health. Dr. Chandra is a renowned psychiatrist in the area of women's mental health and the chapter eloquently captures gender specific determinants of quality of life across psychiatric diagnoses and proceeds to make recommendations for gender specific care for females with psychiatric disorders, very pertinent for the androphilic Indian society. Various interventions and their relation with quality of life have been mentioned in the fourth section. Biological interventions like psychotropics and brain stimulation methods have been addressed in separate chapters and so are psychological and social interventions which improve quality of life in various mental illnesses. Role of art and yoga which are acclaimed the world over for their therapeutic effects in improving quality of life has also been addressed adequately. In the whole process of working towards improving quality of life of patients with mental illness, caregivers and therapists often face burden and experience burnout. The authors have suggested interventions for caregiver quality of life improvement and made recommendations for therapists towards enhancing their own quality of life.

Priced at INR 400, the book is value for money and is a must read for trainees in psychiatry as well as psychology. The book would also be extremely useful for clinicians as well as budding researchers in India who work with patients with chronic mental illness. Release of the book heralds a new era in Indian psychiatry that which keeps patient empowerment at its core.

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