The difference between Chinese and Western Psychiatry

The main differences between Chinese and Western psychiatry came from the differences of history, culture, politics and social economy aspects. In the Western Country, the right of psychiatric patients was very concerned and the psychoanalysis theory contributes to the development of community psychiatry. These factors have never strongly effected on the Chinese psychiatry. The public education on mental health is relatively poorer, the National budget to mental health is lower and the stigma to psychosis is sever than Western Countries.

In China, the purpose of psychiatry service is close to that of medical service: to prevent, treat and rehabilitate people from illness. Psychiatric patients are hospitalized during their illness and go home when they are recovered: reasonable and simple.

In China, the patient's family is more responsible than Western Countries for helping the patient and most families cooperated with hospitals or community mental health centers, which save a lot of national health resource.

"Managed Care" and "Social Security" in China

In China, the health service is "well managed" so far. Government strictly keeps the low-price of the service, which is only about the 1/20 to 1/30 of the price in Western Countries. The health service was considered to be one of the most important factors for the social stability and should be well managed. Physician has to consider the cost of the service and try to limit it in a low level set by government. The "managed care" reduced the health service cost and kept cheap service, but may slow down the development of medicine because of unstable of the professionals.

There were use to have two price-systems in health service, depend on patients paid by themselves or paid by states. The price for private paying (about 20% patients) was only the 1/4 price of the states paying (about 80% patients). But this was changed during the last 5 years: all patients have to pay now about the same price for health service. The Beijing Huilongguan Hospital, for example, as one of the largest psychiatry hospital in China, had about 20% to 30% patients paid by themselves.

The new social health insurance in urban area and mutual health insurance in rural area is taking the place of the old public health insurance system in China and this will be great challenge during the next few years.

(Edited by Shuping Tan)