

1 in 4 People will be affected by mental ill-health at some point during their lives

Mental health is a priority for everyone

World Mental Health Day Sunday 10th October, 2010

Friday 8th October 2010. People with severe or chronic physical illnesses often have co-existing mental health problems, according to World Federation for Mental Health. This year's World Mental Health Day, which takes place on Sunday 10th October 2010, will focus on mental health and physical illness.

Such correlations have been found in Ireland. For example the National Hepatitis C database follow up report of 2009 found that 27% of individuals registered had also been recorded as suffering from depression. International research has also shown that people with severe mental illness often have physical health problems that remain undetected or untreated.

Marking World Mental Health Day, Hugh Kane, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Commission said that, "One in four people around the world will experience a mental illness during their lifetime. The frequent co-existence of depression and chronic illness, pointed to by the World Federation for Mental Health, highlights the need for integrated care within the health service.

"Physical and mental illness do not always coincide, but do so often enough that medical professionals should give this special consideration and attention. The frequent co-existence of mental and physical illness, the fact that there is still a stigma associated with mental illness highlight the need for better integration between mental and physical health care. Integrated care can help people improve the management of coexisting mental and physical illness."

Research produced by the World Federation for Mental Health shows that depression is present in 1 of 5 outpatients with coronary heart disease and in 1 of 3 out patients with congestive heart failure. However most cases are not recognised or appropriately treated.

"Understanding of the relationship between chronic illnesses and mental illness has increased dramatically in the last two decades. It is now known that people with chronic illness have much higher rates of depression and anxiety than the general population. Depression has often been referred to as a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. Therefore, it is not surprising that depression is the most common complication of almost all serious medical conditions.

"People with long term physical illnesses face demanding programmes of treatment. The debilitating nature can further diminish their quality of life. Consequently, it is essential to view physical and mental health as an integrated area of care, and that both are treated equally in a holistic and comprehensive way. Referrals from primary care to specialised care should be available as needed.

"On an individual level managing one's illness means taking responsibility for the actions that are necessary to live life as full as possible. There are several essential steps which have been identified as fundamental to maintain good physical and mental health. These are:-

1. Proper Nutrition

2. Exercise
3. Taking an Active Role in your own healthcare
4. Communication
5. Educating yourself about your illness
6. Pacing Yourself!
7. Keeping humour and Inspiration
8. Nurturing Primary Relationships
9. Reducing Stress

*Pictures sent to picture desks.

ENDS

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