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A diamond in the rough: The biopsychosocial approach in practice

Introduction: Hospital Kuala Lumpur is an established tertiary medical centre in Malaysia. One of its gems is the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit. Most of the time, clinicians tend to focus on the biological aspects of treatment, however, there is usually more than meets the eye. At times cases of child abuse or neglect may be missed unless we look into the root issues.

A case vignette: We highlight Miss NAK, a Malay girl aged 12, who has been through a difficult childhood. She was referred for school refusal, frequent temper tantrums, childish and destructive behaviour. Born out of wedlock to a mother who had multiple affairs, and whom eventually moved out of her life at age 4 months. As father was incapable, he gave Miss NAK to his grandfather to look after till the age of 12 months, after which, via social welfare services was given in to custody of paternal granduncle. As paternal granduncle suffered from multiple medical illnesses including recent myocardial infarction in 2014, he had decided to seek help from social welfare services to return custody back to her biological father, who remains incapable of looking after her due to multiple reasons. She had also started to refuse to return home and would stay overnight at a restaurant. This led father to seek admission for further help. In the case of Miss NAK, the medical social welfare services

were brought in to do psychosocial evaluation and to liaise with social welfare services in order to find suitable placement.

Discussion: It is important for clinicians to understand the complexity of interactions between different domains of functioning which in turns guides management.

Conclusion: A holistic management plan encompasses a biopsychosocial approach which should utilize various services available including allied health professionals and social welfare services.

Speaker Biography

Zaininah Mohd Zain is a highly professional Public Health Consultant. She was the longest serving Director of Hospital Kuala Lumpur. She graduated with MBChB Alexandria University, Egypt in 1982 and specialized with master's Health Services & Hospital Management, South Banks University, London. UK in 1996. She was the 1st Malaysian to receive prestigious the Dr Farndale Award 1996 from South Banks University, London, UK. She was gazetted as Public Health Physician by Ministry of Health, Malaysia in December 2003. A NIOSH Certified Medical Impairment Disability Assessor in May 2005; became MSQH Surveyor in 2009 and Lead Auditor in MS ISO 9000-2000 in 2010. She became Certified Talent Competency Professional (CTCP) Asian Regional Training & Development Organization International (ARTDO) in July 2012. She successfully completed MBA in Leadership, Singapore in 2015 and Masterclass in Finance Modelling, Melbourne in 2016. She is the recipient of the Women Leadership 2015 Golden Tigers Award.

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