Depression and depression literacy of undergraduates in Sri Lanka

Ms Santushi Amarasuriya
PhD Completion Seminar

2:30-3:30pm Monday 14 December 2015
Rm 410 Level 4, 207 Bouverie Street, Carlton

Although undergraduates show high rates of depression, many do not seek the necessary help. Previous studies have shown that mental health literacy, involving knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders and their management, influences help-seeking. Therefore, the “depression literacy” of undergraduates must be assessed. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of such research from non-western developing countries. In response to this, we examined depression and depression literacy of a large sample of undergraduates in Sri Lanka.

This presentation will share some key findings of this study and explore their implications with regard to development of mental health-related educational interventions and response mechanisms for undergraduates, in light of the challenges faced within the Sri Lankan mental health care context.

Ms Santushi Amarasuriya is a current PhD student in the Centre for Mental Health at the University of Melbourne.

Prior to commencing her PhD candidature, Santushi trained as a clinical psychologist in Sri Lanka. She has also been a lecturer in the Behavioural Sciences Stream of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka since 2006.

Santushi’s interest in her PhD project was spurred by her personal encounters with distressed undergraduates and the lack of professional mental health services for them in Sri Lankan universities, the limited mental health research on this population, and her interest in developing a feasible response mechanism for distressed undergraduates.