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Culture, Mental Illness and Human Rights

Abstract of presentation by N. Sartorius, MD, PhD, FRCPsych.

Culture and other facets of the environment exert a strong influence on the way in which mental illness is conceptualized and on the manner in which people with mental illness are treated. The idea that all people, in all parts of the world and in all cultural settings have the same human rights is new. It is gradually gaining universal acceptance but the application of rules and regulations which would make the respect for human rights worldwide a reality lags behind. The presentation will describe international efforts aiming to ensure that human rights are understood and granted, worldwide.