

Mental health is an area that has often been ignored and is little understood. It comes low on the priority list of many countries' agendas and the conditions in which those who suffer from its afflictions are often less than desirable. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 75% of those who suffer from mental health disorders receive no treatment or care. To change the situation, in 2008 the WHO launched the Mental Health Gap Programme to try to 'scale up' services and funding for mental health. "Governments across the world need to see mental health as a vital component of primary healthcare," said WHO director general Dr Margaret Chan, launching the programme. "We need to change policy and practice. Only then can we get the essential mental health services to the tens

of millions in need."

A 2002 study by the WHO Regional Office for Africa revealed that in the majority of countries in Africa, less than 2% of health funds are spent on mental health. Resources are scarce and the demands are great with the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, infectious diseases such as typhoid and yellow fever and health issues caused by poverty and lack of medical care.

UK architectural consultant John Wells-Thorpe has done a lot of work in the region and says mental health is a "long way down the priority list". A few years ago, he visited a mental health facility in Ghana which he said was "like a penal settlement with minimal intervention. Patients were washed and fed twice a day but kept confined", he says. And that was where they stayed. Wells-Thorpe was told that their families often would not take them back even if they got better. The mental health department used a motorcycle three days a week to visit patients across the whole country. However, the WHO is working with countries in the region to try to improve the situation.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is also working to improve access to mental health care in the Americas. In Latin America, as in Africa, less than 2% of the healthcare budget is spent on mental health disorders. Funds are often spent on psychiatric hospitals but Dr Jorge Rodriguez, PAHO's senior advisor on mental health says mental health services should be integrated into primary care, enabling patients to remain with their families, as well as helping to minimise

stigma and discrimination. The integration of mental health into primary care forms a focus of PAHO's Regional Action Plan for Mental Health which was launched in September 2009.

Architect Mike Nightingale, from Nightingale Associates in the UK, believes there is opportunity for both the developed and developing world to learn from each other. The development of smaller mental health units in the UK, Canada and the US, for example, could easily be transferred to developing countries. And the use of motorcycles to visit mental health patients may provide a cost-effective mode in developed countries. Nightingale has worked on over 100 mental health

# Mind over matter

Stigmatisation and a lack of funding have put mental health low on the priority list for many nations. But global initiatives and advances in the design of mental health facilities are beginning to break those barriers. *Kathleen Armstrong* reports



Box Hill Adolescent Mental Health Unit was designed with curved roofs, cream block work and large expanses of glazing



Bright colours were used to provide positive stimuli from the environment at the Mental Health Services for Kids and Youth at the Western Hospital in Melbourne

projects over a span of about 20 years. The challenges are great but he has seen progress. In Japan, for example, he says mental health facilities were not so good about 10 years ago, but when he went back a few years later, they had improved immensely. "I would like to see some of their facilities here," he says, commenting on their use of roof gardens and how robots are used to monitor patients with dementia.

The Asia-Pacific Community Mental Health Project (APCMHP) is also working to improve mental health care. With support from the WHO Asia-Pacific Region, representatives from 14 participating countries, including Australia, China, Japan and India, are working to share best practice and find ways to improve the delivery of mental health services.

In China, the National Institute for Mental Health estimates that 16 million people suffer from psychotic disorders and 50-70% of them go untreated. In 2004, according to a recent APCMHP report, there were 565 psychiatric hospitals, 499 psychiatric departments in general hospitals and 57 mental health stations and 19 mental health clinics. In December 2004, the Chinese government launched the '686 Programme', establishing community mental health services throughout the country – one urban and one rural in each of the 30 provinces. "As a result of this programme, more local officials pay attention to mental health issues and psychiatric hospitals now consider integrated prevention and comprehensive treatment," the report said.

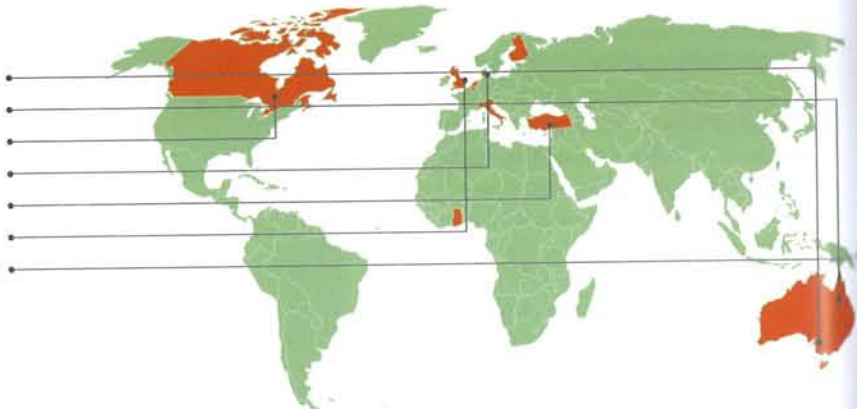
In Australia, there is also a push to update healthcare facilities around the country and mental health is high on the agenda. Kerry Ross from Savills says the focus is not just on updating current facilities but also on increasing the provision of services for the elderly (in New South Wales (NSW), part of the state's Specialist Mental Health Services for Older People (SMHSOP) strategy), building facilities for child and adolescent services – and community services. Ross has worked on a range of projects in NSW, including the recently completed mental health facilities in Orange in the Central West of





Wandsworth Recovery Centre, UK

- Australia, Adelaide mental healthcare facilities
- Australia, Queensland masterplanning consultants
- Canada, Toronto mental healthcare consultants
- Denmark, Skejby acute hospital competition
- Turkey, Bakirkoy mental healthcare consultants
- UK, Middlesbrough mental healthcare facilities
- New Zealand, Waikato masterplanning feasibility study



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the state, and the expansion of mental health services at Nepean Hospital in Penrith, on the western edge of Sydney. The Nepean development aims to consolidate primary and community care services with mental health services. Located on the acute hospital site, the mental health facilities will be laid out over two levels and include SMHSOP, high dependency and adult services. Catering to a culturally diverse population, the facility will provide a range of community services, with office space for home visitors, activities for those receiving day treatment and the number of inpatient beds will be expanded from 34 to 69. Secure courtyards will allow access to the outdoors. There will also be spaces for children to play, while on family visits, without impacting on patients and other visitors.

**The challenge in all of this is to achieve the right balance between privacy and dignity**

### Emerging trends in design

In Victoria, architects Silver Thomas Hanley (STH) have just finished working on three projects in and around the Melbourne area. The 12-bed Box Hill Adolescent Mental Health Unit was designed with curved roofs, cream block work and large expanses of glazing to create a positive, reassuring and welcoming environment for residents, with colours sympathetic to its suburban streetscape. The project was the first in the state to use displacement ventilation in bedrooms. The Maroondah Mental Health Unit on the eastern outskirts of Melbourne is laid out in a hub-and-spoke design with two 25-bed inpatient units and sits



next to the acute hospital. A mixture of textures and materials were used in the design of the building to provide a contemporary feel. An earlier project the team worked on was the MHSKY (Mental Health Services for Kids and Youth) at Western Hospital in Melbourne, incorporating a 12-bed adolescent wing for children aged 12–18 and a separate 16-bed unit for youth over 18. A common theme in all of these projects has been the selected use of bright colours. "If you are depressed, you don't want to look at pale colours," explains STH director Aija Thomas.

UK-based MAAP Architects are also known for their work in the mental health sector and have worked on projects around the world, including Australia, Canada, eastern Europe and the UK. Director Chris Shaw says there are some emerging trends common across all countries, which present

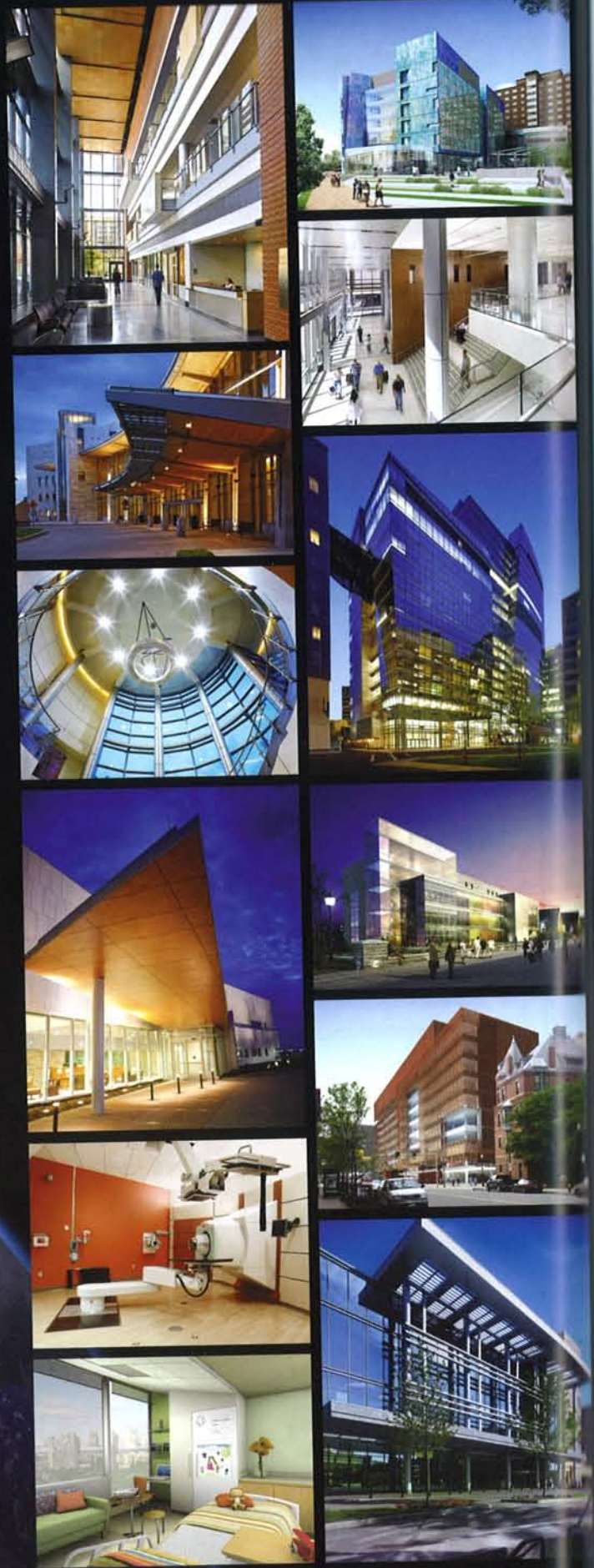


The contemporary styled Maroondah Mental Health Unit in Melbourne

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## Project Report: Mental Health



Broadway Malyan's award-winning design for Woodhaven Mental Health Unit, UK



A sense of neighbourhood was at the heart of the design for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto, Canada

systems design challenges to architects and healthcare providers alike. These include the ageing population and the increasing prevalence of early onset dementia in younger people. Shaw says the point of admission for a mental health patient is also a point of trauma and therefore needs care and attention. Well-designed circulation spaces are also key, as they become a point of social contact and therapy. Outside space also becomes a usable functional room in which therapy can take place. But it is essential to ensure that facilities provide a safe and secure environment for patients, staff and visitors. The challenge in all this is to achieve the right balance between privacy and dignity.

MAAP is currently working on Woodland View, a 40-bed child and adolescent unit in Priddy in north England which will provide specialist mental health services to children aged 8–18. It recently completed a 312-bed facility in Middlesbrough which provides a range of mental health services including forensic, child and adolescent, older adults and learning disabilities – and will be a "model of integrated care", Shaw says.

### Involving staff and patients

Mental health nurse Joe Forster believes that the involvement of staff and patients in the design of a mental health facility is essential to ensure that it meets their needs. Forster's first involvement was when the facility in which he worked in Mersey Care NHS Trust was being refurbished. Clinical staff from the Rathbone Low Secure Unit became involved in the design

from the beginning, visited other sites to see what worked and what did not and, as a result, he says, the facility now works well. Staff feel ownership of the final solution as they were involved in the design.

Rather than write a shopping list, Forster advises, it is important to examine what is needed for a particular facility. Staff at Rathbone worked with subcontractors to develop solutions when they couldn't find what they wanted on the market. One of these was finding a solution for natural ventilation. Forster says windows in previous buildings had small, high windows with no real access to fresh air. The team worked with manufacturer Britplas who developed the SafeVent window which slides open and has a stainless mesh which allows ventilation but is secure. "We want people to have control over their environment," Forster says.

Chris Little from HLM Architects says that strengthening and maintaining links with the community is one of the biggest trends in mental health at the moment, building a space that prepares patients for returning to the community, as well as helping to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.



New mental health facilities were recently completed at Orange Hospital in New South Wales, Australia



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AZ SINT-JAN HOSPITAL in Bruges, Belgium | General Hospital | delivery summer '09

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## Project Report: Mental Health

"At Bethlem [an 89-bed medium secure unit in south London designed by HLM], we talked about the journey, penetrating a period of personal change through the space inside," Liddle says. "The building is part of the journey. You need to open up the opportunity of movement with levels of security that can be gradually stepped down as people move closer to being able to leave." Liddle says the design of Bethlem succeeded because the designers worked closely with the clinical specialists who worked in the unit, sticking closely to the clinical brief.

Closer integration with the community not only helps patients reintegrate as they progress out of the unit but it also helps break down the barriers for mental health. "People don't understand how to deal with mental health disorder," Liddle says. "Community-facing approaches can help young people understand mental health issues."

Broadway Malyan is another UK firm that spends time looking for solutions that work for mental health units. It even has its own design unit which has developed prototypes for anti-ligature door handles, bathroom fittings and other fixtures. It has also designed award-winning mental health units, including Woodhaven Mental Health Unit in Hampshire which won the Building Better Healthcare Award as best designed mental health project in 2004. Another project designed by Broadway Malyan is Horton Haven, a mental health facility in Surrey. The development includes the remodelling of two Victorian villas, comprising 30 beds in total. In a conservation area, the villas are linked by a building with meeting rooms and a landscaped terrace which provides a calm space for both patients and visitors.



The Pima County mental health centre was Designed to create a non-institutional environment, including a skygarden

### Non-institutional

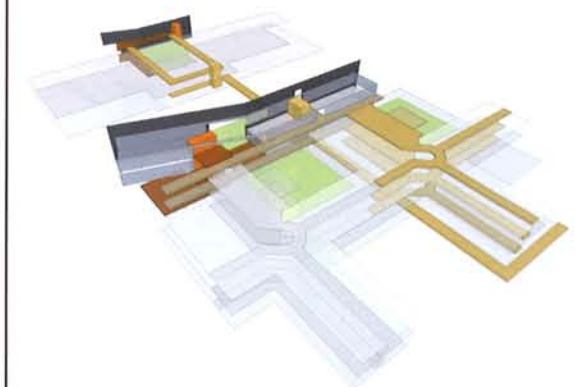
In the US, the new mental health centre in Pima County, Arizona has also been designed so that it doesn't feel institutional. The multi-level facility lies adjacent to the hospital and is made up of two buildings – the Behavioural Health Pavilion and the Crisis Response Center. The Behavioural Health Pavilion has 96 inpatient beds, outpatient beds and an integrated courtroom has been included in the complex for patients who enter the hospital through the court system. The Crisis Response Center includes crisis assessment and a stabilisation unit for both youth and adults. The facility has a complex circulation system, with a completely separate circulation system for staff.

Canadian architects Montgomery Sisam are working on several new mental health facilities in Ontario, Canada, including Homewood, a centre for addictions in Guelph. The development, set on a river and hillside, will involve the development of new buildings while preserving existing 19th century buildings.

However, it is its redevelopment of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto that is drawing attention. It aims to create an 'urban village' with residential dwellings that have street addresses, shops and open spaces to help de-institutionalise the site and create a sense of normalcy, says architect Terry Montgomery. The design includes clusters of small units with 6-8 residents (in some cases going up to 12) with terraces on the upper levels for outdoor access and to bring in natural light. As patients get more privileges, they can go out to access shops, cafes and outdoor spaces. Montgomery says it will also encourage families to visit. "In CAMH we are trying to create a real sense of neighbourhood, not one that is contrived," Montgomery adds.

CAMH was the winner of the 2009 Design and Health Academy Award for Best Mental Health Design.

Kathleen Armstrong is a healthcare writer



The circulation system at Pima County includes a separate system for staff