

One-day Workshop on “Strengthening the capacity of mental health nurses from district hospitals on epileptic care in Rwanda”.

Introduction.

The training took place on December 17, 2022, in Kigali, and was attended by 60 mental health nurses from districts, referral hospitals, and some non-governmental organizations. It was facilitated by Dr. Sebera Fidèle, Neurologist at Ndera Neuropsychiatric Hospital Rwanda, Mrs. Providence Umuziga, RMHN, MSN, PhD(c), Lecturer, University of Rwanda, as well as Edmond Dufatanye from Rwanda Biomedical Center/Mental Health Division and President of Rwandan Society of Psychiatric-mental Health Nurses (RSPN).

The objective of the training was to strengthen the capacity of mental health professionals involved in the management of epilepsy by refreshing their general knowledge of epilepsy and by providing them with a framework for exchanging experiences on the management of different clinical cases and scenarios they encounter in their daily work.

Conduct of the session

The following topics were covered in the workshop:

1. **Introduction and Epidemiology of Epilepsy:** This session, facilitated by Mrs. Providence Umuziga, was an opportunity to present to the participants the objectives of the training and its importance in improving the care of people with epilepsy. It also allowed the participants to be updated on the epidemiological data and information on epilepsy at the national level, in Rwanda, as well as at the international level.
2. **Introduction to anatomy, pathophysiology, etiology, classifications of epilepsies, and treatment:** Animated by Dr. Fidèle SEBERA, this session allowed to make an anatomical refreshment to allow the participants to understand the different forms of epilepsy and their classifications. It was also discussed the etiology, the differential diagnoses of epilepsy, the assessment in the presence of epilepsy, as well as the treatment and the therapeutic strategy. Clinical cases were presented and discussed at the end of this session, which allowed the participants a better understanding of the whole content of the session.
3. **Nursing Care:** This session was facilitated by Umuziga M. Providence, who presented the different types of care that can be provided to a person with epilepsy in a hospital or health center, or at home by their family and/or caregivers. A refresher was also given on the management of a person with epilepsy during a seizure. The session was mostly participative, with each participant sharing his or her own experience in the field.
4. **Psychosocial Care:** Presented by Edmond Dufatanye, this session was also more an exchange of experiences. Psychosocial problems faced by people with epilepsy were discussed, including the stigma they face from their families, friends and sometimes from themselves. Support strategies were discussed, including home visits, setting up psycho-educational groups, community awareness, working with community health workers, etc.

Resolutions and recommendations

From all these debates and exchanges of experience came some resolutions and recommendations:

- Strengthen community awareness to fight against stigma
- Strengthen home visits to improve patients' adherence to anti-epileptic drugs
- Involve community health workers more in the follow-up of patients
- Organize regular training/refresher sessions for mental health professionals to update their knowledge and practices.
- Organize more sessions with enough time for all mental health professionals from all healthcare systems in Rwanda involved in the care of persons living with epilepsy.

Conclusion

This training met the expectations of the participants, who showed great interest in the different sessions that were presented. It was found that this training came at the right time and that the professionals really needed this training/refresher. They responded in large numbers to the invitation and came from most of the district hospitals. They showed a great thirst, resulting in their recommendation that this training/refresher should be offered as often as possible and that it should benefit many other mental health professionals who had not had the chance to participate that day.

The Organization Rwandaise Contre Epilepsie (ORCE) thanks the ILAE for contributing to the success of this training. ORCE also thanks the University of Rwanda, College of Medicine and Health Sciences/ Department of Mental Health Nursing, and Rwandan Society for Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses (RSPN).



Figure 1/Introducing by Providence UMUZIGA



Figure 2/ Participants



Figure 3/ Participants



Figure 4/ Presentation by Dr Fidele SEBERA

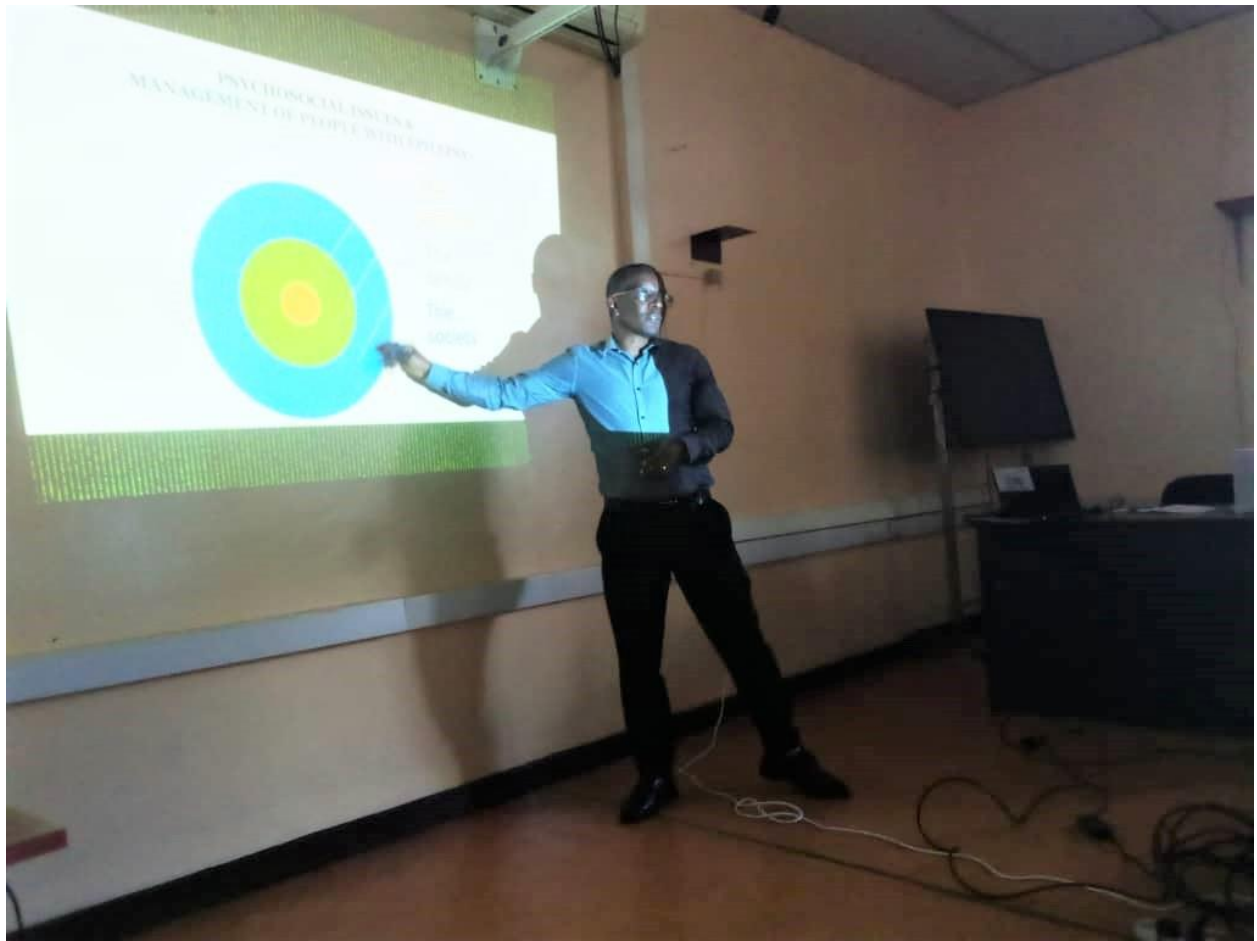


Figure 5/ Presentation by Edmond DUFATANYE



Figure 6/ Exchange around a coffee



Figure 7/ Group Photo