

APA ODB – Careers in Psychiatry Panel Talk – Friday March 4, 2022 (12 – 1 PM)

(Transcribed, edited and annotated for publication to the ODB website)

Virtual Panelists: Drs. Katalin Margittai, Shery Zener, Alan Fung, Amina Ali (ECP), Lily Van (RFM)

Moderator: Dr. Urvashi Prasad (RFM)

Introduction to APA and membership benefit - the purpose of this virtual panel discussion was:

- a. To inform medical students and residents of the various career paths within psychiatry as shared by panelists
- b. To offer opportunities for interested medical students and residents to reach out to panelists for mentorship opportunities
- c. To increase awareness of the APA and recruit medical students and residents to join (<https://www.odbapa.org>)

1. What were the most important factors you identified in helping you decide on a career in psychiatry?
 - a. Drs. Van and Ali: flexibility within the discipline to choose a hospital-based practice (with more structure, collegiality, additional sessional fees and hospital premiums), or private practice without bureaucracy and setting your own hours, or government (with a salary), or consult to private organizations (eg. pharmaceutical companies); interesting work in many different subspecialties (emergency/ crisis, child and adolescent, consultation-liaison, geriatric, forensic, etc.); capacity to work in different settings, as job opportunities abound in urban as well as rural, underserved areas (with large financial incentives to relocate there); ability to make deeper connections with patients, as regular sessions typically last 45 minutes; more control over work-life balance.
2. Everyone on the panel has such varied and unique foci of practice. Can you tell us a bit about the focus/foci of your practice and why these areas interested you?
 - a. Dr. Fung: interested in cultural psychiatry and working with Chinese-speaking seniors, bringing an important cultural component into thinking about patient populations and their differing clinical issues and needs, in order to better help them.
 - b. Dr. Zener: described her career as beginning with general psychiatry in private practice, then completing certification in Geriatric Psychiatry and working in this field at Baycrest and North York General Hospital, before moving on to her current position at the Crisis Clinic at Michael Garron Hospital, all the while maintaining a small private practice. Encouraged us to try different areas of psychiatry in order to find the best fit for each.
3. What does your day look like (i.e. structure of your practice)?
 - a. Dr. Ali: spoke about her work in forensic psychiatry. Everyday is different. Inpatients, outpatient, court, brief assessment unit, providing testimony, private assessments, etc.
 - b. Dr. Margittai: spoke about organizing her private practice to have one unstructured administrative day per week (to run errands, finish paperwork, deal with any urgent unforeseen patient issues, do CME, work on research, etc.); three full days of individual

psychotherapy sessions from 8:00 am to 5 or 6:00 pm; and finishing off with Fridays at North York General Hospital attending 9:00 am staff meetings or Grand Rounds, doing an intake assessment, then running a mindfulness group in the afternoons. No on call:-)

4. How did you decide on pursuing a fellowship or not?
 - a. Dr. Van: spoke about three different fellowships (Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry and Geriatric Psychiatry) available to psychiatry residents who want to formally pursue a RCPSC-recognized subspecialty. There are always pros and cons - but more difficult to acquire an academic position without one.

5. Work-Life balance:
 - a. Dr. Fung: important to maintain that work-life balance to avoid burn-out: carve out time for family, friends, and yourself; consider other rewarding activities outside of medicine like advocacy, volunteering, hobbies, exercise, and meditation.
<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/well-being-and-burnout/well-being-resources>

6. Expected salary? (ranges: academic vs. community vs. private)
 - a. Dr. Ali: variable, depends on how much you work, what type of work you do, and how you're being paid (e.g., OHIP, hospital stipends, salaried academic positions, etc.)
 - b. Dr. Margittai: noted the about average psychiatrist income in Canada for 2021 being around \$280K but varied widely, with up to 500K in North Bay due to generous incentives for working in underserved areas. <https://www.dr-bill.ca/blog/practice-management/psychiatry-salary/>

7. Do you have any additional insight into the benefits of joining APA?
 - a. Dr. Zener: spoke about the changes in psychiatric care over time - being exposed to the cutting edge of this evolution as part of the APA and observing the shift from psychoanalytic models of illness requiring intensive psychotherapy, to a more biological model with medications being prioritized, and which in turn is now being challenged by concepts of neuroplasticity, the indelible impact of early childhood adversity, and individualized treatments guided by genetic analysis and pharmacogenomics. Other challenges come from "psychotherapists" who purport to offer the same services as psychiatrists, at a lesser cost (MSW, RN, PA, PhD, etc.).
 - b. Dr. Margittai: spoke about attending the APA annual conference and hearing international leaders in their specialties speak about their work and their experiences, enjoying Mindgames (APA national Residency Team competition that challenges residents with questions on patient care and medical knowledge - perhaps Toronto will have a team one day!?), and networking with peers and potential supervisors/ employers. There are also multiple fellowships available to residents every year, and there is a 25% discount on all books from APA Publishing along with free access to the AJP. Opportunities exist to publish in the online Residents' Journal, and to join the editorial board of the AJP-Residents' Journal, a forum for psychiatry residents and fellows to share ideas and experiences with colleagues.
 - c. Dr. Ali: spoke about benefits of forming connections and networking, learning about how psychiatry works in different areas in Canada, the US and worldwide

- d. Dr. Van: reminded us that one benefit of joining, especially as a medical student, is that it is free, and residents pay only \$69.00 annually from their second year of membership.
- e. Dr. Fung: addressed additional opportunities to do work outside of clinical psychiatry (e.g., medical education, leadership, EDI advocacy, research, etc.)

<https://www.psychiatry.org/join-apa/residents-and-fellows>