



Breaking the chains of stigma

An Initiative of Janssen Research & Development, LLC and Museum Dr. Guislain

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Dr. Sotheara Chhim Wins 2017 Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award for Developing Mental Health Services in Cambodia

Honor Celebrates Exceptional Contributions Made in the Field of Mental Health Advocacy and Awareness

GHENT, Belgium – 10 October 2017 – Today, the Dr. Guislain Museum and Janssen Research & Development, LLC announced that Sotheara Chhim, M.D., M.P.M., Ph.D., has been named the 2017 winner of the [Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award](#). The award honors Dr. Chhim for his extraordinary efforts developing mental health services in Cambodia through scientific therapeutic approaches and launching the Operation Unchain initiative, a program designed to break the stigma of mental illness. He will be recognized for his contributions tonight during a ceremony in his honor at the Dr. Guislain Museum in Ghent, Belgium.

“Dr. Chhim’s work to literally break the chains of those suffering from mental health disorders in Cambodia embodies Dr. Guislain’s passion to stand up for the rights of patients with mental illnesses and improve their care and ultimately their social position,” said Brother René Stockman, General Director of the Dr. Guislain Museum. “It’s an honor to give this type of work the recognition it deserves to continue to destigmatize the perception of mental illness in our communities globally.”

Dr. Chhim is the executive director and senior consultant psychiatrist of the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) Cambodia, the country’s leading Non-Government Organization (NGO) in the field of mental health care and psychosocial support. Under his leadership, TPO Cambodia has developed and implemented programs to raise awareness about psychosocial and mental health conditions in many parts of Cambodia. Dr. Chhim and TPO have also provided mental health counselling, treatment, and specialized services for prisoners, gender-based violence survivors and torture survivors. To date, more than 220,000 patients and families have benefitted from his and his team’s work.

“After experiencing the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge regime and the lack of mental health care, I was inspired to pursue my lifelong passion of helping people by becoming one of the first psychiatrists in

Cambodia,” said Dr. Sotheara Chhim. “I’m honored to receive the 2017 Dr. Guislain Award and look forward to expanding my work and bringing even more awareness of mental health issues in communities throughout Cambodia.”

In 2015, Dr. Chhim launched Operation Unchain, an initiative to help the poverty-stricken rural communities of Cambodia where mental health treatment, awareness and resources are unavailable, which results in patients being locked up or chained. Operation Unchain provides treatment to these patients and educates their families and communities on mental health leading to a change of attitude towards the mentally ill. It also provides a chance for the patients to lead productive lives. Since its launch, this project has treated 68 patients who were chained or caged between two to 20 years, impacting 62 communities.

“We are honored to recognize Dr. Chhim’s tireless efforts to provide resources to destigmatize mental illness in communities throughout Cambodia,” said Hussein K. Manji, M.D., Global Therapeutic Area Head for Neuroscience, Janssen Research & Development, LLC. “With the Dr. Guislain Award, Janssen seeks to pay tribute to individuals and organizations for their exceptional contributions to help reduce mental health stigma in communities around the world.”

The Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award is named for, and honors, the legacy of Dr. Joseph Guislain (1797-1860), the first Belgian psychiatrist to provide scientifically based treatment for patients with mental illness and a staunch patient advocate. Both the Dr. Guislain Museum and Janssen are organizations with a rich heritage and long-standing involvement in the field of mental illness research, treatment and education. For 31 years, the Dr. Guislain Museum has existed to educate the public and rectify the misunderstandings and prejudice associated with treatment for mental illness.

The Dr. Guislain Award program is a joint project of the Dr. Guislain Museum and Janssen Research & Development, LLC. Janssen provides financial and in-kind support for the program. Dr. Chhim will receive a \$50,000 prize that must be used toward further work to reduce societal stigma about mental health and help those patients still chained or caged in Cambodia.

Janssen’s sponsorship of this award reflects its nearly 60-year commitment to helping find solutions for patients with mental illness. The Award is an important component of the *Healthy Minds* initiative of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, which aims to encourage collaboration among biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and public-sector partners to accelerate the discovery of new therapeutic solutions for diseases and disorders of the brain, as well as support the mental health community and various advocacy organizations and projects.

Dr. Guislain Museum issued the call for nominations for the Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award on 23 February 2017. More than 35 nominations were received from across the globe, after which a jury of international mental health advocates and renowned authorities in the field selected Dr. Chhim.

About the Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award

Individuals, organizations or projects all over the world that have made an exceptional contribution in dealing with, or promoting the awareness of, mental health care are eligible to receive the Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award. The Award is given to an individual(s), organization or project that:

- has made an exceptional contribution to mental healthcare in the broadest sense on a cultural and/or social level;
- has provided a genuine contribution to decreasing stigma around mental health conditions;

- has promoted attention for mental health care; and
- has done all this with passion, creativity and innovation.

The jury is comprised of:

- Mohan Agashe – Actor, psychiatrist, member of Governing and Executive Council at Children Film Society of India
- Ellen Baxter – Founder of Broadway Housing Communities (BHC) in New York
- Siri Hustvedt – Essayist, novelist and poet
- Vikram Patel – Pershing Square professor of Global Health and Welcome Trust Principal Research Fellow at the Harvard Medical School, professor at Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, adjunct professor and co-director of the Public Health Foundation of India's Centre for Chronic Conditions and Injuries, honorary professor at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, co-founder of Sangath, fellow of the UK's Academy of Medical Sciences, and has served on several WHO expert and Government of India committees
- Bernard Sabbe – Professor of medical psychology and psychiatry at University of Antwerp, and psychiatrist/psychotherapist at Psychiatric Hospital Duffel
- Andrew Scull – Distinguished Professor of sociology and science studies at University of California, San Diego
- Erik Thys – Psychiatrist in the University Psychiatric Centre at the KU Leuven in Kortenberg and the Psycho-Social Centre St. Alexius Ixelles in Brussels, Belgium

About Dr. Guislain Museum

The Dr. Guislain Museum was founded in 1986 in Ghent, Belgium, and its exhibits address the history of psychiatry in a permanent collection and through a series of half-yearly changing thematic exhibitions. The Museum features an array of psychiatric photographs, two centuries of comprehensive archives and an extensive library chronicling the history of psychiatry. Comprehensively, the Museum seeks to educate the public and rectify the misunderstandings and prejudice associated with treatment for mental illness. The Museum Dr. Guislain attracts 70,000 visitors each year.

About Dr. Joseph Guislain

Dr. Joseph Guislain (1797-1860) was a driven activist for patients with mental illness and the first Belgian psychiatrist to provide scientifically-based treatment for these individuals. As a passionate advocate for those with mental illness, Dr. Guislain worked tirelessly to stand up for the rights of patients and help improve their social position. He lectured and published extensively about mental illness and enjoyed considerable recognition by his contemporaries.

For more information, about the Dr. Guislain Award, please visit www.drguislainaward.org.

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