The RANZCP Faculty of Forensic Psychiatry Victorian Subcommittee welcomed

Dr Raj Darjee

Presenting an educational lecture on

Sexual homicide: the role of the psychiatrist

Serious violence, including homicide, towards women by men is currently of great concern, particularly domestic and sexual homicide. The latter is highlighted by the recent murder of Eurydice Dixon by James Todd in Melbourne. As well as the understandable horror, fear and revulsion caused by such killings, there are questions as to what drives such perpetrators, are they mentally unwell, can such homicides be prevented, can such individuals ever be safely released, is treatment feasible or effective, and what role if any does psychiatry play in addressing such issues?

Based on the latest international research on sexual homicide offenders and offences (including studies conducted in Australia and New Zealand and in Scotland) and on clinical experience with sexual homicide offenders in prison, secure hospital, court, police and community contexts, I will attempt to give evidence based and clinically relevant answers to the above questions. Psychiatrists do have a role to play in preventing such violence, in understanding the role of mental disorders which may be relevant to criminal responsibility and sentencing, in assessing risk, in treating cases, and in working with other agencies and disciplines involved in managing sexual homicide offenders.

About Dr Rajan Darjee

Dr Rajan Darjee is Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist with the Forensicare Problem Behaviour Program and Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychiatry at the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, Swinburne University of Technology. He moved to Melbourne in 2018 from Edinburgh in Scotland, where he worked in forensic psychiatry for 20 years. His clinical and research expertise is in sexual offending, paraphilias and personality disorders. He played a lead national role in developing and implementing government policy, legislation and guidance for sexual and mentally disordered offenders in Scotland. He has consulted to and trained various professionals and agencies in working with sexual offenders, including community correctional services, the police, mental health services, prison services, the judiciary, child protection services and government departments.

He was on the advisory board for the development of the treatment program for sexual offenders used now in the community and prisons in Scotland, and he developed national guidance for the use of pharmacological treatment for sexual offenders in Scotland. He has over 60 publications, including the recent Routledge International Handbook of Sexual Homicide Studies. He was the first expert accredited by the Scottish Risk Management Authority (RMA) to assess risk posed by serious violent and sexual offenders for the High Court, and the first mental health professional on the board of the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (SCCRC). He currently researches aspects of sexual offending, including sexual homicide, sadism, risk assessment and internet offenders.

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