

More seeking help for mental illnesses

The number of registered patients with serious mental disorders in China reached 5.4 million last year, with three-quarters of them suffering schizophrenia, China's top health authority said on Friday.

Of the patients, 88.7 percent are under the management of health authorities, and receive public services such as medical care and living subsidies, Wang Bin, deputy chief for disease control and prevention at the National Health and Family Planning Commission, said at a news conference on Friday, which coincided with World Health Day.

Previous figures released by the commission showed the number of such registered patients was 4.3 million by the end of 2014, with 73.2 percent managed by health authorities.

China has been improving mental health services, with the number of institutions that offer such services reaching nearly 3,000 by the end of 2015, compared with 1,650 in 2010, Wang said.

Last year, the number of certified psychiatrists in China exceeded 27,700, and the number of psychotherapists in China exceeded 5,000, she added.

Patients with serious mental disorders have been receiving improved services throughout China with multi-departmental cooperation such as regular follow-up diagnosis and treatment.

In places such as Beijing and Shanghai they also enjoy favorable insurance policies, which provide free medication and more reimbursement for medical bills, according to her.

In Beijing, guardians are eligible for a 2,400 yuan (\$370) annual subsidy from the municipal government if they deliver proper care, according to the city's health and family planning commission.

China faces challenges in improving mental health, due to rising incidences of mental disorders caused by depression, tension, alcohol and dementia, she said.

A survey conducted by professionals from more than 40 psychiatric hospitals and universities in China between 2012 and 2014 found nearly 3.6 percent of Chinese suffer depression-related mental disorders.

Although the rate is lower than countries such as the United States, Australia and South Africa, it saw an increase compared with previous surveys, which may be attributed to increasing psychological pressure on the public due to rapid economic and social development, she said.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 54 million people in China suffer from depression, and is estimated to cost the nation \$7.8 billion every year from lost work days, medical expenses and funeral

expenses, it said in a statement on Friday.

According to Yu Xin, a professor in psychiatry at Peking University Sixth Hospital, said a major obstacle to prevention and treatment in China is the lack of importance paid to the issue by the public and patients.

"This means only a small portion of people with mental diseases are actually diagnosed and treated," Yu said.

Lack of facilities and talent at community-level medical institutions are also major obstacles, he added.

"In many other countries, patients with mental disorders first seek treatment at community health centers or their family doctors," he said. "But in China, most patients go to big comprehensive hospitals first, as other institutes may lack qualified psychiatrists."

Wang said health authorities will improve capabilities of grassroots hospitals to offer mental health services, such as encouraging top public hospitals to provide training to medical staff.

[Beijing to supply more land for residential housing](#)

Beijing announced plans Friday to supply 6,000 hectares of land by 2021 in a bid to meet the market demand of 1.5 million units of residential houses.

Beijing plans to supply 5,000 hectares of state-owned construction land and 1,000 hectares of collectively-owned construction land in the following five years, according to the Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning and Land and Resources Management.

Seventy percent of the land will be used for the construction of residential houses with property rights, while 30 percent of the land will be used to build rental houses.

In 2017, Beijing will offer about 1,200 hectares of residential land to build 300,000 units of residential housing.

Analysts said the rising supply of residential land is aimed at relieving the supply-demand contradiction in Beijing's property market and help stabilize housing prices.

In March, Beijing introduced a spate of measures, including higher down payments, higher mortgage rates and tougher purchase restrictions, to cool the red-hot property market.

News story: Motor racing boost to English tourism

New laws come into force on 10 April 2017 which will allow motor racing events to take place on closed public roads in England.

The move could see small races hosted by local communities, bigger European rallies or even a future Monaco-style Grand Prix in an English city, offering huge economic benefits to local communities.

Transport Minister Andrew Jones said:

Britain is a world leader in the motorsport industry and this will further cement our position. There are already races of this kind in some areas of the British Isles which are incredibly popular, attracting thousands of spectators. New road races will boost local economies through increased tourism and hospitality, and offer community opportunities such as volunteering.

The Motor Sports Association and the Auto-Cycle Union, the respective governing bodies for four- and two-wheel motor sport in the UK, will be authorised to issue permits for the races. They must consult the council, police and other local bodies and be fully satisfied that the event will be safe. Local authorities have the final say over whether a race can go ahead, and may require additional safety measures before, during or after the event as a condition of allowing a race to take place.

Roads Minister Andrew Jones and Ben Taylor, Managing Director, International Motor Sports, with a Mygale-Ford Formula 4 car and a Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race car.

Rob Jones, Motor Sports Association Chief Executive, said:

This is a seismic shift for UK motorsport, and one that the MSA and the wider motorsport community have pursued determinedly for many years. We can now take motorsport to the people, and in turn those local hosting communities have the opportunity to benefit from the economic boost that these events may provide.

Gary Thompson MBE BEM, Auto Cycle Union General Secretary and Clerk of the Course for the TT, said:

A lot of hard work has gone into making this happen. Working with

the MSA and the Department for Transport, putting this legislation in place will make a big difference to road racing in this country. Obviously this will make road racing more attractive as new opportunities come along but also will have a positive economic impact on those areas staging closed public road racing which can only be a big plus for motorcycle racing and those areas wanting to host such an event.

Roads Minister Andrew Jones with Tom Sharp, Porsche 2015 Rookie champion.

Nigel Mansell CBE, former F1 world champion, said:

I have seen first-hand the very significant impact of motor sport on the economy of the Isle of Man and Jersey, so this is a great move forward for the sport and will bring visitors and pride to parts of the country that wish to stage such events. I am delighted that this government is embracing motorsport, which will assist the UK's world-leading position and improve the sport's ability to help provide opportunities and focus for young people.

The government [consulted on changing the law to allow racing on British roads in 2014](#). There were 6,077 responses from individuals, local authorities, police forces and other organisations, with an overwhelming majority in favour of the proposals.

Statement by the Spokesperson on the roadside explosion in South Central Somalia

Thursday's road side explosion in Lower Shabelle near Golweyn village taking a large number of civilian lives increased the already great suffering faced by Somalia. Our thoughts go to the families of the victims and to all Somali people.

Drought has caused significant deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa and especially Somalia. As a result hundreds of thousands find themselves on the move.

The European Union remains strongly committed to Somalia and its people. Reconstruction of a stable and democratic country, benefitting its population, and a Somali owned security sector to combat terrorism is key for development and the security of the region.

Remarks by Vice-President Dombrovskis at the informal ECOFIN press conference in Valletta

First of all I would like to express condolences to the families and close ones of the victims of the horrendous terror attack in Stockholm.

Moving to topics of today's meeting, I would like to thank you, Edward, for hosting us in this beautiful venue, which for many centuries has been the centre of the political life of this island and for the excellent organisation of the event.

At lunchtime, we had a very timely discussion on deepening of the EMU. It falls between the publication of the Commission's White Paper on the Future of the EU and the preparation of our reflection paper on completing Economic and Monetary Union. So input from Ministers was very timely.

The Euro area is more resilient today than it was just several years ago, but there is a broad consensus that we need to act now to strengthen the resilience of each individual economy and the euro area as a whole.

We discussed the guiding principles on our work on deepening of EMU, which include:

- finding the right balance between risk reduction and risk sharing;
- re-launching the process of convergence within the euro-area;
- and when advancing our work in EU area, being open to non-euro countries.

We also had a substantial discussion of non-performing loans (NPLs).

We shared the view that high ratios of NPLs in several Member States are weighing on the performance of the EU banking sector and have negative implications for economic growth.

Of course one has to underline that tackling NPLs is primarily the responsibility of Member States, because the level and structure of NPLs differ from one country to another and policy instruments to address the NPLs are within the competence of Member States.

However, there are a number of things where we can join up national and EU level efforts to devise a comprehensive and pragmatic strategy on NPLs. I hope that we can make quick progress under the Maltese Presidency, as Edward just outlined.

There was a broad support to develop a blueprint on how to devise a national asset management company (AMC). We should make use of the existing market experience of already existing AMCs which are working already in several Member States. And we need to develop a solution, which Member States can use and implement, and set out how this can be done in line within the EU legal framework.

We are also exploring further initiatives to facilitate the development of a secondary market for NPLs. High quality and comparable data on NPLs are indispensable for this, because investors need to know what they are buying. As a first concrete step, I have asked the European Banking Authority to further investigate the possibility of issuing guidelines on NPL data standardisation; and we are consulting on obstacles faced by private secondary market buyers and loan servicing companies.

For the development of secondary markets, many speakers mentioned the importance of increasing the efficiency of insolvency and loan enforcement frameworks. The Commission will keep up the pressure in the Country Specific Recommendations and via benchmarking reviews. We also invite co-legislators to treat our proposal on business restructuring and recovery as a priority.

Several other work avenues were outlined, including on supervisory action and bank sector restructuring, but I believe ECB will have some further comments in those work strands.

To conclude, today's discussion was a useful first step in building a more coordinated European approach to accelerate the reduction of NPLs. Of course this common EU strategy should take due account of the differences between national banking sectors as there is no one-size-fits-all approach in this area.

Thank you.