MENTAL HEALTH IN PRIMARY CARE

Module Code: GP117  
Credit Weighting: 10  
Contact Hours: 12 (plus allow 2-3 hours per week x 12 weeks distance learning)  
Timing: Trimester 3 (March – June)  
Module Leader: Dr. Brian Hallahan, Department of Psychiatry, NUI Galway

Module Description
This module aims to provide general practitioners and community-based nurses with the relevant knowledge and skills required to accurately assess, diagnose, treat, appropriately refer and support the care of patients with mental health problems. It will cover the main subdivisions of psychiatric disorder likely to be encountered in a primary care setting. In addition to providing evidence-based information on management, the module will allow for relevant practical learning in the workshops and provides an opportunity for discussion of complex issues through the Blackboard-based discussion board.

Learning Outcomes
At the end of this module practitioners will be able to:

- Understand the most common psychiatric disorders
- Describe the structure and function of the psychiatric services
- Take a detailed psychiatric history, examine mental state and assess risk
- Know when and how to employ the Mental Health Act
- Manage common psychiatric conditions efficiently
- Know the scope and limitations of treating psychiatric disorder in primary care.

Module Content
This module consists of 6 distance learning units (2 weeks each) supported by 2 workshop days.

1. Depression and mood disorders
2. Anxiety disorders
3. Alcohol and addiction disorders
4. Schizophrenia and psychosis
5. Common psychiatric problems in childhood and adolescence
6. Common psychiatric problems in old age

The workshops include:

- Configuration of the mental health and associated services – negotiating pathways of referral from primary care
- Assessment of risk (self-harm, suicide, harm to others)
- Working with the Mental Health Act
- Therapeutics – psychological and pharmacological.

Teaching and Learning Strategies
Online distance learning and face-to-face workshops.

Assessment Strategy
45%: continuous assessment (E-tivities and online participation)  
55%: practice-based assignment on completion of module.