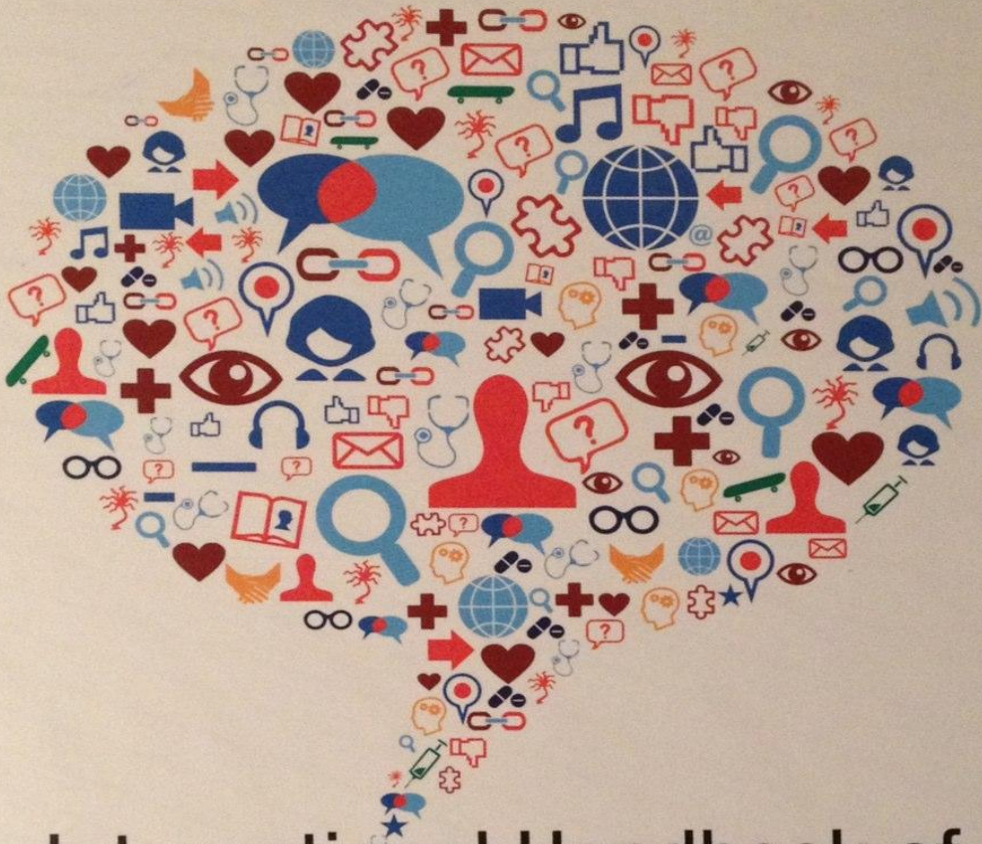


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International Handbook of  
**PSYCHIATRY**

A Concise Guide for Medical Students,  
Residents, and Medical Practitioners

## Chapter 2

# International Issues in Psychiatry

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Why address international issues in psychiatry? There are multiple reasons for addressing international issues on the pages of this textbook, but foremost, as Melvin Sabshin<sup>14</sup> aptly wrote, “Whether it is recognized or not, all psychiatrists are internationalists, and the field of psychiatry is international.” For a long time, the main international issue in psychiatry was the abuse of psychiatry in various countries around the world (notably, in the past, the USSR, Chile under Pinochet, Cuba, South Africa during apartheid) in particular and ethical and human rights issues in general. However, as the world has become more interconnected and many areas of human activities have globalized, it has become obvious that many other issues addressing modern-era psychiatry are global, international, and that Sabshin<sup>14</sup> is correct in calling the field of psychiatry an international one.

Psychiatry, much more than other medical disciplines, is connected with many other fields and societal and social issues. As psychiatry investigates the brain and its relationship to the human experience and behavior, it is frequently asked to help to understand various undesirable social phenomena (e.g. addictive behaviors, cults, terrorism, and violence).<sup>4</sup> One of the branches of psychiatry, social psychiatry, actually focuses on the relationship between manifestation, course, and outcome of mental illness