

SUMMARY

DR. AVERY ALEXANDER KRISMAN (CPSO# 61346)

1. Disposition

On August 13, 2018, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (the Committee) required psychiatrist Dr. Krisman to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to his therapeutic approach, communications, record-keeping and third party reports.

2. Introduction

The Patient complained to the College about Dr. Krisman's care, specifically, his failure to adequately diagnose her issues, his use of an inappropriate model of treatment, and his provision of an unprofessional and inaccurate report to her disability insurance company.

Dr. Krisman stated that he did properly diagnose the Patient and that the method of treatment he used was appropriate and was helpful to her. As for his report to the insurance company, he maintained that it was proper and accurate.

3. Committee Process

A Mental Health Panel of the Committee, consisting of public and physician members, met to review the relevant records and documents related to the complaint. The Committee always has before it applicable legislation and regulations, along with policies that the College has developed, which reflect the College's professional expectations for physicians practising in Ontario. Current versions of these documents are available on the College's website at www.cpso.on.ca, under the heading "Policies & Publications."

4. Committee's Analysis

The Committee was of the opinion that Dr. Krisman's records overall were poor, with no proper consultation note, no proper mental status examination, statements that the Patient was "not depressed" without any documented reasons for this conclusion, and no discussion about post-partum depression other than to disparage the diagnosis. There were also no discussions of pharmacotherapy or any records of prescriptions (which Dr. Krisman indicated he would take over from the family physician but then did not). Also, aside from a reference to the Patient's passive suicidal ideation during the initial presentation, the issue of suicidality was not addressed again in the notes.

In terms of Dr. Krisman's therapeutic approach in this case, the Committee noted that he documented no reasons for why he believed that the Patient did not have a persistent depression or other personality diagnosis that may impact her mood. He limited himself in terms of the treatment modalities used (focusing on a rigid form of psychotherapy), and his notes were critical of biological therapies as "sugar coated placebos", which is not in keeping with modern psychiatric practice. In fact, the biopsychosocial approach is part of standard psychiatric practice, and awareness of it is expected.

The Committee noted that many of the comments in Dr. Krisman's records reflect his attempt to provide interpretations of the Patient's behaviour according to his specific therapeutic approach. The Committee stated that Dr. Krisman's belief that this approach was successful is not supported by the Patient's family physician's notes suggesting pharmacotherapy changes, other treatment modalities and second opinions.

Dr. Krisman provided a letter to the Patient's insurer which was vague, did little to explain how he came to his conclusions, and spoke of the Patient theoretically being able to return to work without explaining what that meant. The Committee stated that while Dr. Krisman may have had a genuine opinion that the Patient was able to work, a more appropriate report would have fleshed out the subjective symptoms, how they impacted the Patient in the workplace and how they would not be an impediment, rather than maintaining that she could work in theory.

Overall, the Committee was concerned by Dr. Krisman's therapeutic rigidity, his disparagement of biological theories and diagnoses, his communication with the patient and with her other health care professionals (which the Committee noted had been the subject of previous difficulties for Dr. Krisman), his poor record-keeping, and his inadequate third party report.

In the circumstances, the Committee determined that it was appropriate to require Dr. Krisman to attend for a caution as set out above.