

# Editorial:

## Hope: The Lost Frontier of Psychiatry?

Hope is a powerful concept of relevance to mental health and has for eons been considered a critical therapeutic aspect in medicine and an essential component of recovery. However, while it may appear to be clear-cut, close to fifty definitions of hope have been proposed with many associated conceptual frameworks (1). What is clear is that hope does invoke meaning for patients and functions as an important coping mechanism (2). It remains a concept relatively underexplored in the psychiatric literature most likely due to its “complex and personal” nature (3). Thus most research on the subject has been limited to the chronic illness and oncology field where resilience is often explored (4). Nevertheless, it remains important for psychiatry and has been found to be associated with enhanced coping, well-being, a buffer between depression and negative life events and a shielding factor against suicide (5). In this issue of the Israel Journal of Psychiatry, several papers address the topic. Mendelson et al., examines the long-term effects of traumatic environments of varying intensities and its potential effects. Braun-Lewensohn et al. explores the concepts of “sense of coherence” and “hope” in three cultural groups in Israel while Topaktaş et al. investigates perceived social support, psychological state and future expectations among Turkish adolescent students. On the subject of ethnic differences in response, Abu-Kaf and Golan Shahar study depression and somatic symptoms among the two ethnic groups of Bedouin Arab and Jewish students in Israel. Feingold and Lev-Ran describe the use of primary addictive substances

of those treated in a hospital based addiction medicine facility. Interestingly, on the subject of hope, it has been suggested that the concept may be a factor contributing to wide-ranging primary or secondary substance use prevention and thus a less likelihood of substance use in adolescents (6). All in all, this issue promises to be an interesting read and we thank the authors for their contributions. Viktor Frankl, in his epic work *Man's Search for Meaning*, quipped that “everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.” This may be the hope addressed to some extent in this issue.

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### References

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