

Editorial: Honorable discipline of psychiatry - we have much of which to be proud

Coming out of a successful national Israel Psychiatry Association conference, it is evident that we have a vibrant and successful national association. Moreover, it is clear that we have a fascinating subspecialty of medicine that continues to innovate and reinvent itself as the role of technology develops with progress in neuroscience trickling down to clinicians – from the lab to the patient's bedside - all in the best interests of the patient. This obviously needs to go hand in hand with progress in ethical and professional standards – but there is evidence for this as well – with empirical based research as well as progress in ethical codes making its impact at various levels in the profession. It is imperative that the tremendous progress in the field in all areas is transmitted to the community and that, in addition to managing mental illness, we also share our knowledge with the community. Similarly, and just as important, this awareness should be communicated with future trainees in the field and the next generation of psychiatrists so that we can continue to attract those with the potential to share values and knowledge of the field. We are proud of our profession – let's share this...

This issue of the IJP promises to cover the range of interest in psychiatry – straddling biological, psychological and social aspects of psychiatry. Continuing the tradition of the critical contribution of Israeli based researchers to the understanding and management of PTSD, Levi et al. note that treatment seeking and PTSD strongly relate to level of combat exposure. Along the subtheme of trauma, Karagüzel et al. investigate sexual dysfunction and childhood trauma in female patients with fibromyalgia. They find that there are differences in various aspects of marriage and communication in those with fibromyalgia with higher emotional and general traumatic scores. Still with the theme of trauma, Cohenca-Shiby and Aviad-Wilchek indicate in a cohort of Holocaust survivors that the presence of a significant other may soften the traumatic scars from a severe trauma and which still may have effects in the distant future. An interesting paper by Grundman Shem-Tov et al. explores unique sociocultural issues regarding challenges of the diagnosis process of eating disorders

among Ethiopian adolescents in Israel. Considering the growing importance of awareness of substance abuse in general in Israel, Jaworowski et al. investigate knowledge regarding alcohol related harm among medical and nursing staff. Along with their results, they indicate a need to implement educational interventions in medical staff in order to increase familiarity of alcohol related harm. This would be for the purposes of improving various health care delivery services and education for patients with these issues. In a second paper by Jaworowski et al., in a more specific fashion, they investigate the level of retention of knowledge surrounding alcohol related harm among medical students with findings suggesting that educational interventions do play a role over time.

Brender et al. explore attitudes and knowledge of medical staff with regards to ECT, finding that differences do exist in levels of knowledge between various sectors of mental health care providers. Their findings suggest the importance of better knowledge in reducing stigma about the treatment. Asman et al. indicate that psychiatrists, despite some reluctance, do see a role for themselves in the media as well as encouraging a strong presence in the media by their professional psychiatric association. Along the lines of support for a patient-centered approach – a model of care which emphasizes patients' contribution to deciding on goals of medical management, Bensimon et al. indicate the benefits of relaxing music chosen by patients for the purposes of reduction in levels of stress and agitation. Finally, in another tip of the hat to patient autonomy and level of service by means of harnessing technology, Weisman et al. show how a smartphone application (“app”) may improve treatment compliance and potentially overall treatment success in a sample of youth with ADHD.

The issue covers a wide range of subjects – reflecting a microcosm of the field of psychiatry. It promises to be an interesting read.

Rael Strous
Editor, IJP