

**Editorial Body, Mind, and Culture 2020**Carl Eduard Scheidt<sup>1</sup> 

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**Editorial**

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The year 2020 marks a milestone in the history of our journal, which has been continuously published as a quarterly journal since 2013. The journal is now indexed by Scopus and will thereby reach an increasing readership. Authors will have the chance to publish in a journal with qualified bibliometric properties, which for young scientists striving for a research career is an important incentive in their academic activity. We are convinced that reaching this milestone will help to promote the main goal of our journal, which is the establishment of interdisciplinary and international scientific dialogue on health and illness from a holistic psychosomatic perspective. Whereas psychosomatic medicine has been interdisciplinary from its very beginning, integration of the fields of internal medicine, neurology, psychology, and psychoanalysis intercultural research has been introduced only lately. The enormous influence of social and cultural differences on issues of health and disease however can be appropriately studied only from a comparative perspective based on a cooperation and scientific discourse across nations and cultures. This was and is the rationale of the ongoing scientific cooperation between the German and Iranian Universities and Institutions that have been supporting the development of this journal over the last decade.

As can be seen from the archive of IJBMC, the field of psychological and psychosomatic medicine covers a vast array of topics and is still extending rapidly. One recent topic is psycho-oncology (see the contribution in this issue page xx), which is also the central issue of a current research cooperation between the International University of Isfahan, Iran, and the Psychosomatic Department of the Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service. Other topics concern rehabilitation, psychotherapy research, eating disorders, diabetes, and various medical conditions. The spectrum of scientific methods used includes meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials, observational and single case studies, and qualitative methods. The Journal in recent years has

established a rigorous peer review system for the quality assurance of the published articles. In addition to the online publication a limited number of print editions, designed particularly for institutional documentation, are available.

In the current issue, a number of high quality clinical trials are assembled. This includes a study by xx reporting on a randomized controlled trial in which the effects of a five-session online psycho-educational intervention on pregnant women were evaluated. The authors observed the significant effects of their intervention on women's psychological health. Since pregnancy for a substantial number of women is associated with considerable distress due to body image, hormonal, and other physiological changes, this is a clinically relevant and important finding.

In a cross-sectional comparison of 100 patients suffering from multiple sclerosis (MS) and a non-clinical control group, the authors reported differences of the body image in MS. Since the external body image in MS is affected only in relatively progressed cases, this finding is interpreted as reflecting a heightened concern in patients regarding their disease progression, and therefore, indicating a need for psychosocial support.

A third study has investigated the effects of 8 sessions of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on patients suffering from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), a functional gastrointestinal disorder associated with disturbing physical and psychological symptoms. The study participants included 30 patients in the experimental group and 30 non-clinical controls. The study design was randomized controlled trial with a pretest and a posttest measurement. The ACT-therapy yielded significant results in terms of improved self-care and hopefulness in the intervention group, thus supporting the effectiveness of this treatment in IBS.

In another study, Frederickson's Positive Emotion Training Program and psychodrama were evaluated in a group of 10-11-year-old students with dyslexia. The rationale of this study was that the improvement of underlying emotional difficulties in dyslexic youngsters may result in enhanced cognitive functioning. This randomized controlled trial was conducted on two experimental groups (one receiving Positive Emotion Training and the second receiving psychodrama), and a non-clinical control group as comparison. The emerging results show that only the Positive Emotion Training was effective in improving emotion regulation in the dyslexic students group.

Heart surgery is associated with considerable psychological distress often resulting in anxiety and depression. Therefore, interventions improving psychosocial well-being in this particular patient group are of high clinical importance. A study performed in Bu Ali Hospital investigated 50 patients after cardiac surgery. Half of the total sample received a six-week intervention aimed at improving body awareness. The results show that the intervention effectively enhanced body awareness, and thereby, reduced anxiety and depression.

The study of psychosomatic problems in the context of working environment is a relatively new field of psychosomatic medicine that has received increasing attention. Psychosocial distress due to specific working conditions may lead to long sickness leave and early disability. The investigation of these issues is important for prevention planning. In the study reported here, the authors investigated fatigue and symptoms of anxiety and depression amongst police personnel in Tabriz, Iran. They found clear interrelationships and a mutual influence between physical and psychological symptom clusters.

Finally, a study reported a Delphi Consensus Process of oncology experts in Iran

aiming to define the content of a curriculum in psycho-oncology, which is appropriate for the specific needs of such a curriculum in Iran. In this process, 36 experts participated and identified four areas of expertise. These included education, health care management, and research. Due to the high importance of the family in the Iranian cultural context, involving the family in the psychosocial care process of cancer patients should have a high priority. Although the burden on the family of cancer patients has been stressed in other cultural contexts, psycho-oncology curricula often focus on individual patients rather than their social network.

Overall, this issue of the journal again gives an impression of the broad clinical field of psychosomatic medicine. Experiences of the Corona pandemic, which belong to the sad and dramatic experiences of the year, have urged us to re-consider and perhaps re-evaluate our priorities with regard to health and illness and our systems of health care. An open discourse on health care management systems is of vital importance for our future. The interdisciplinary and international dialogue to which we hope to contribute can reflect on these vital issues of health care and disease in the care services provided to patients.

### **Conflict of Interests**

Authors have no conflict of interests.