

## Forewords for the Conceptual Bases of Psychiatry for the Person

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Person-centered Psychiatry is very close to my heart and to the philosophy of the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH), an organization composed of mental health professional associations and individuals, service users, carers, and advocates working collaboratively for the care of the mentally ill. It is for this reason that the WFMH co-sponsored in 2008, 2009 and 2010 all three Geneva Conferences on Person-centered Medicine.

Prominent members of the WFMH Board such as Mohammed Abou-Saleh, John Copeland, George Christodoulou, Helen Millar and Roger Montenegro have been distinguished speakers in these three very successful meetings.

Those of us at the WFMH feel that work of the quality and content of the present monograph on *Conceptual Bases of Psychiatry for the Person* promote the objectives of the WFMH. I congratulate its editors and authors for their scholarly and constructive work.

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The World Health Organization (WHO) from its inception has promoted a broad concept of health defined as complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization, 1946). Along the course of its work, WHO has explored and developed improved strategies towards achieving this lofty concept of health. More recently, the Sixty-second World Health Assembly approved a resolution for the renewal of primary health care (WHA62.12). The ultimate goal of primary health care is better health for all. To move in this direction, changes are needed in four policy areas: dealing with health inequalities by moving towards universal coverage; integrating health in all policies; ensuring more inclusive health governance, and most important, reorienting conventional health care towards people-centred primary care (World Health Organization, 2008).

Between 2008 and 2010, the International Network for Person-centered Medicine (INPCM) organized three Geneva Conferences on person-centred medicine. These conferences brought together top global medical and health organizations to discuss emerging developments in this area. In May 2010, WHO joined that effort and organized a special session on People-Centred Care in Low and Middle Income Countries.

The work of the INPCM to refocus the priorities of medicine and health care is leading to a range of publications across disciplines, including mental health. We are pleased with the publication in the *International Journal of Person Centered Medicine* of a comprehensive and multi-perspective monograph on Conceptual Bases of Psychiatry for the Person. Their editors and paper authors are prominent experts on person-centered psychiatry and medicine. We welcome efforts for understanding person-centered care within and across other areas of health care. We hope that the Fourth Geneva Conference in May 2011 will be an opportunity to further link person-centered clinical medicine with people-centered public health.

## References

[1] World Health Organization (1946): Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19 June - 22 July 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.

[2] World Health Organization (2008): World Health Report 2008. Primary health care: now more than ever. Geneva, World Health Organization.

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After its foundation in 1946, the World Medical Association (WMA) based its initial work on patient oriented medicine as reflected in its core documents of the Declaration of Geneva (1948), the International Code of Medical Ethics (1949) and subsequently in its most prestigious document, the Declaration of Helsinki on ethical principles concerning research on

human subjects (1964, lastly revised in 2008). Since then, the WMA's main effort has been in the fields of medical ethics, with the patient (person) in the center. More recently, initiatives such as the publication of *Caring Physicians of the World* (Coble, 2005) gained momentum with its focus on ethics, science and care. In the last years, it has been involved in the organization of the Geneva Conferences on Person-centered Medicine in collaboration with a number of global health institutions such as the World Health Organization, the World Organization of Family Doctors, the World Federation for Mental Health, the International Council of Nurses, the International Federation of Social Workers, the International Pharmaceutical Federation, the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations, and the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, among others.

The path-opening Geneva Conferences on Person-centered Medicine started in May 2008 having as overall theme *Conceptual Explorations of Person-centered Medicine* with papers published as a supplement of the *International Journal of Integrated Care* (Mezzich, Snaedal, Van Weel & Heath, 2010). The Second Geneva Conference discussed in May 2009 a number of topics ranging *From Concepts to Practice* and a selection of them is being published in the *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*. The Third Geneva Conference reviewed *Collaboration across Disciplines, Specialties and Programs* and its papers will be published in the new *International Journal of Person Centered Medicine*.

As part of this paradigmatic effort coordinated by the International Network for Person-centered Medicine (Mezzich, Snaedal, Van weel & Heath, 2009), of which the World Medical Association is a formal member, we are witnessing publications across specialties, such as on Person Centred Pediatric Care (Appleyard, 2009) and Person-centered Medicine for Older people (Snaedal, in press). We are, therefore, pleased with the publication in the *International Journal of Person Centered Medicine* of a monograph on Conceptual Bases of Psychiatry for the Person. This work reviews the topic from a variety of important viewpoints. It is an example of a multi-perspectual approach to understand the conceptual bases of person-centered care in a particularly complex and important area of medicine. The editors of the monograph and the authors of the included papers are well known to us as distinguished lecturers in the Geneva Conferences on Person-centered Medicine. We look forward to similar approaches for analyzing and advancing person-centered care within other areas of medicine as well as across them.

## References

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- [3] Mezzich J. E., Snaedal J., Van weel C., Heath I. (2009). International Network for Person-centered Medicine: Background and first steps. *World Medical Journal* 5, 104-107.
- [4] Mezzich J. E., Snaedal J., Van Weel C., Heath I. (2010).: Conceptual Explorations on Person-centered Medicine. *International Journal of Integrated Care*, Supplement 10.
- [5] Snaedal J. Person-centered medicine for older people. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, in press.
- [6] [www.wma.net/publications](http://www.wma.net/publications)