

Dear Readers,

The last issue of 2023 is, as always, rich in interesting articles about important and current problems. Although it might seem that the pandemic has become a thing of the past, as many psychiatrists predicted, its effects on mental health are still visible. Moreover, in the autumn and winter months the number of cases increases again and, unfortunately, not all of them progress like an “ordinary cold,” but they leave serious consequences for health and functioning. Previous research conducted among populations affected by the pandemic clearly indicates its significant impact on the mental condition of society. During the pandemic, the main stressors included economic uncertainty and significant limitations in everyday social functioning. The instability of the situation and concerns about its impact on the future led to growing uncertainty, frustration and fear about the quality of life after the pandemic [1]. The sense of threat to life and anxiety disturbed the mental functioning of Poles [2]. In stressful situations, it is a natural process to seek support from other people, which reduces individual feelings of insecurity. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has deprived people of direct support resulting from personal contacts. Additionally, there was a recommendation to separate oneself from extended family, friends and other important social networks, and even to refrain from engaging in social activities [3]. At that time, groups particularly exposed to stress were school-age children and teenagers as well as students. Significant limitation of social contacts, online classes and confinement at home affected learning, functioning and mental state. In their article, Alicja Kawalec et al. refer to coping methods among Polish students during the pandemic. Pandemic stress and the SARS-Cov2 infection itself influenced the occurrence and psychopathological picture of disorders [4]. In the current issue you will find an interesting case report of acute psychosis potentially related to infection. Other case reports include fatal lithium poisoning and aripiprazole treatment of a patient with Asperger syndrome.

The current issue of *Psychiatria Polska* opens with a review article on the current state of knowledge about the properties and use of vortioxetine. This one of the newest antidepressants has various uses; for example, its usefulness and safety have been described in depression in the course of bipolar disorder, in which the use of antidepressants is controversial [5]. In addition to pharmacotherapy, other non-pharmacological, biological treatment methods are being developed in psychiatry, including, above all, transcranial magnetic stimulation. It is used not only in depression but also in patients with schizophrenia. The use of rTMS in schizophrenia is currently the subject of many promising studies, primarily in two areas: persistent hallucinations and reduction of negative symptoms [6]. The effectiveness of rTMS in the treatment of negative symptoms of schizophrenia has been assessed in several randomized clinical trials controlled with sham stimulation, the vast majority of which had positive results. Currently, the class and level of recommendations for this method in the treatment of negative symptoms have been rated as IIb/B, which means it is a method that can be considered [7]. Of course, it is important to remember the principles of qualification and patient safety [8]. In this issue you will find promising results of research by Chinese authors on the use of this method in patients with negative symptoms of schizophrenia.

Effective treatment and care of patients require systemic solutions, which is the goal of the psychiatry reform that has been implemented for several years. One of its pillars is the development of Mental Health Centers. In 2022, an article was published in *Psychiatria Polska* on the evaluation of the process of implementing the MHC pilot program [9], and now it is worth to read the assessment of how psychiatric health services are implemented in MHC, compared to the period before the introduction of the pilot program.

Unfortunately, despite increasingly improving health care and modern treatment, some patients do not achieve improvement and functional independence and, as a result, become residents of nursing homes. Mariola Friedrich et al. deal with the nutritional style of chronically mentally ill people staying in 24-hour nursing homes. Previously, the authors analyzed the impact of dietary modification on carbohydrate metabolism [10], anthropometric parameters and body composition [11], and now – on selected health indicators.

Another interesting work concerns the predictors of aggressive behavior in adolescents. The authors draw attention to boldness, disinhibition and meanness. There is a certain pattern defining the continuity of the mechanism of development of the disorder – from the predictors of psychopathy noticeable in middle and late childhood, through psychopathic traits manifested in adolescence, to the psychopathic personality in adulthood. Ultimately, the features of meanness-insensibility were considered the most significant [12].

The briefly discussed articles do not exhaust the content of this issue of the journal – you will also find information on pregorexia, anxiety disorders in the postpartum period and maintaining abstinence in people addicted to alcohol. There are also Polish adaptations and validation of research tools.

We wish you an interesting and inspiring reading

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