

From the Editors

Psychiatry is a special field of medicine, it touches the essence of human experiences and suffering in every dimension: emotional, bodily and interpersonal one. It is impossible to talk about mental health in isolation from the social and cultural context. Therefore, psychiatrists cannot be indifferent to any form of discrimination and hatred. There have been times in the past that doctors have served the wrong cause, or that they simply have not adopted a position. These are the dark pages of history that are a source of shame. People do not choose their nationality, social origin, skin color or sexual orientation. They, on the other hand, choose between good and evil, love and hate, tolerance and discrimination, respecting others and dehumanization. Non-white individuals deserve the same respect and life chances as white people. LGBT is not a hostile ideology and a threat: these are people, one of us, our colleagues, friends, family members, it is just us! The death and suffering of every black person attacked in the street just because he/she looks different than the majority is our shame. The death and suffering of every child who decides to commit suicide because he/she cannot withstand the humiliation and violence that he/she encounters when it turns out that he/she loves someone of the same sex, is also our shame and our responsibility!!! Paraphrasing Edmund Burke's words: let us remember that for evil to triumph, it is enough for decent people to remain silent. We have no right to call ourselves decent people when we are silent; when we are silent we have blood on our hands.

We sincerely hope that our journal is open to any scientific discussion, far from any ideology, and close to the ideals of reliable science.

We present to you a very diverse and rich issue of *Psychiatria Polska*. It was created in a situation of a pandemic, and with it a state of suspension, uncertainty and stress. As psychiatrists, we are also at the front line of the fight against COVID-19 – we do not treat pneumonia, we do not use respirators, but we care for mental health of people who are particularly affected by the plague: our patients, but also people who have been healthy and coping well in life so far, who now buckled under the weight of problems and suffer from sadness, fear and insomnia. We also take care of health of our colleagues – doctors, nurses, paramedics, we organize psychotherapeutic support for them, we listen to their difficult and sometimes painful stories. In the previous issue of our journal, we published an important article written by Professor Janusz Heitzman on the impact of the pandemic on mental health [1], now we encourage you to read the recommendations under the auspices of the Polish Psychiatric Association on how to help people with dementia in this difficult situation.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the professional work of Professor Janusz Rybakowski – an outstanding psychiatrist, clinician and scientist, whose research contributed to the development of world psychiatry. He is an unquestionable authority and expert in the field of bipolar disorder, with particular emphasis on lithium treatment, however, a significant part of his achievements also concerns schizophrenia [2–4]. It is his article, devoted to the half-century history of schizophrenia research, that opens the issue of *Psychiatria Polska*. Professor Rybakowski focuses primarily on the biological aspects of the illness. Whereas the team of Professor Andrzej Cechnicki from the Department of Psychiatry in Krakow develops psychosocial models of etiopathogenesis and course of schizophrenia, paying attention to the significant role of social relations, especially work [5]. In modern psychiatry, there has been a significant change in the understanding of our patients with schizophrenia: from the analysis of being ill towards focusing on the recovery process, from the differences between healthy and ill people towards the search for similarities and strengths [6], from a strict division into staff and patients towards appreciating the role of recovery assistants and 'experts through experience' [7].

Neurostructural and neurocognitive changes in affective disorders are a fascinating area of research [8, 9]. The role of broadly understood inflammatory factors in the etiology of depressive disorders is no longer in doubt, while in recent years much attention has been paid to changes in the endoplasmic reticulum. Genetic research also continues to contribute new data expanding knowledge

about the etiology of depression. In this issue of our journal, several important articles are focused on these biological aspects of affective disorders.

Electroconvulsive therapy is one of the most effective and, at the same time, the safest method of treating depression, especially the one resistant to pharmacotherapy [10]. Unfortunately, the knowledge about ECT is very rudimentary and unreliable, based on information from pop culture. It is worth reading an interesting article on this issue written by Krzysztof Kramarczyk et al. Psychological and breastfeeding support program, which is an example of how to deal with perinatal depression, is also related to the issue of mood disorders. At this point, it is worth to recall the recommendations of the Polish Psychiatric Association for treatment of affective disorders in women of childbearing age [11].

Karolina Dyrda et al. describe therapeutic programs for patients with autism spectrum disorder. This serious neurodevelopmental disorder requires intensive and comprehensive interventions, especially those whose effectiveness has been confirmed by high-quality scientific research [12]. An important publication in the current issue is the article written by Professor Janusz Heitzman et al. on the implementation of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) guidance on forensic psychiatry in Poland.

Unfortunately, paraphilia and pedophilic acts performed by clergy have become a hot social topic in recent years. A widely commented and discussed distinction between paraphilia and paraphilic disorders [13] appeared in the DSM-5. Jacek Prusak addresses this issue in his reliable article devoid of sensationalism. This is an extremely important voice in the discussion on the sexual abuse of children by priests.

We hope you enjoy reading our articles and we wish you health and perseverance.

**Dominika Dudek – Editor-in-Chief,
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