

Emerging Research Areas in Addictology

Dear readers,

In this issue, we bring you a number of interesting contributions, including papers highlighting the growing importance of drug use prevention processes and outlining the history of addiction treatment. The prevention processes play a dominant role in national health systems. In recent years, in addition to the epidemiological aspect, the socio-economic aspects have also been taken into account increasingly. Experts, policymakers, and the regulators of the health systems have gradually recognised the need to quantify the differences between the cost of the diagnostic and treatment processes and the cost of prevention processes. While it is difficult to quantify all these procedures through economic indicators, it is much more challenging to quantify the effectiveness of prevention programmes and the social costs of substance use. And, appropriately, these areas are gradually gaining more and more attention and creating pressure for collaboration between multiple scientific disciplines and government departments which, over time, may give rise to a comprehensive multidisciplinary area. It raises the need to bring together experts from different sectors and to share the existing experience at the national and international levels. Public health has long been known for its multidisciplinary nature, represented mainly by cooperation in the medical and social fields. This emphasises not only the individual value of health, but also its social value. Health as a public good also plays an important role in the whole socioeconomic system. The quality of life is also closely related to health, the different levels of which in individual countries are the cause of health and socioeconomic disparities – not only between countries, but also within the individual countries. Regional disparities, as well as the development of the health systems of the particular countries, are also significantly influenced by political and economic priorities and interests. Nowadays, healthcare in developed countries is considered a modern comprehensive social system, providing healthcare services that ensure optimal protection of health of the population, as well as sufficient prevention.

This issue of the *Adiktologie* journal also deals intensively with the prevention aspect. The first paper highlights the importance of the examination of the impact of smoking on healthcare spending. Today, in all developed countries, central attention is being paid to finding optimal models to ensure the sustainability of the health and social systems, which are affected not only by changes in national mortality and morbidity rates, but also, to a large extent, by globalisation, demographic ageing, environmental pressures, and so on. Currently, we are witnessing the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its health consequences, with a drastic effect on national economies. While the development of substance use can be predicted by applying existing methods, the development of pandemics and their consequences is much more difficult to foresee. This puts pressure on the simplification of the prognoses in the de-

velopment and impacts (both health and economic ones) of communicable and non-communicable diseases, many of which may be associated with substance use disorders.

In the first paper, the authors examine the impact of smoking on health expenditure in a sample of member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, focusing on six variables. They reveal some interesting findings within these countries throughout the period under study. The situation may also change in this field and the rate of substance use during and after the COVID-19 pandemic may be dramatically different from its original level in the countries under observation. This provides a space and suggestions for further research in this area and an appeal for collaboration within multidisciplinary research teams. The Facebook recruitment strategy introduced in the second paper can also be a useful tool for obtaining information on drug use. In it, the authors draw attention to the importance of searching for other forms of monitoring and obtaining data on addictions which is necessary for the creation of appropriate prevention programmes. Another interesting study is provided by the authors of the third paper, which focuses on the behaviour of men who have sex with men regarding their attitude in the syndrome context. The authors performed analysis focusing on several dimensions of their research. They see the benefit of their research work mainly in a better understanding of the syndemic and multifactorial conditions that influence the sexual behaviour of men who have sex with men, including the minority stress that may be rooted in the deficiencies in our view of these people.

The importance of prevention programmes in the various population groups is explored by the authors of the fourth paper. In terms of its topic, the study addresses smoking. The authors note the necessity of a gender-specific approach when implementing prevention programmes. The social system in schools should also play an important role in these programmes, as should the efforts of parents in participation in the prevention activities of the school class-based social system, as well as parental engagement in the prevention effort. This is a crucial point of the current situation in health systems.

In spite of the importance of addressing the issue of addiction, history should not be forgotten at the present time as this is of great importance in the examination of many current trends, factors, and impacts in the health system. The authors of the last paper convinced us of this; in it they wish to ground us in the processes of the establishment and shaping of the Alcoholism Treatment Centre of the Municipal Institute of National Health in Bratislava-Dúbravka and to analyse its activities over the period from 1961 to 1966. Mapping this history is extremely important not only for the present, but also for future generations. Only promoting important historical contexts and facts in the field of addiction treatment will allow a better understanding of the impor-

tant processes and efforts related to the establishment of treatments in the past, their sustainability, and barriers to development, as well as their links for future generations.

I believe that this composition of the papers will be very motivating for readers and it will bring them a lot of interesting information and inspiration for their own research and suggestions. In this way, our effort is not only to attract readers from the professional and research areas, but also to offer them a cross-section of what is being studied in the world at the moment and what the current trends, impacts, and problems are. And this message will be discussed throughout the upcoming issues of this journal, which we will try to prepare for readers as attractively as possible.

Košice 13 May 2020

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