

New Trends in Professionalization of the Workforce

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

when we began to prepare this special issue of the *Addictology* journal more than a year ago, hardly anyone expected it to attract so much interest and end up as a double issue. The number of articles reflects the growing international interest in professionalization of the workforce that provides drug demand reduction (DDR) services. The articles received are not only greater in number, but also in breadth than we anticipated. There are three points we would like to highlight in this regard.

The first is the departure from simply cataloguing university programmes and products intended for the training of DDR professionals to describing and categorizing them. As we already mentioned in the previous editorial (Miovský & Johnson, 2021), completing an initial survey to map programs was an essential step which naturally followed from the creation of the ICUDDR. Once catalogued, understanding the content and structure of the programmes and their focus became a logical next step. The typology we published (Miovský et al., 2021) is an initial attempt at opening a discussion about the possible ways of classifying programs. Despite the enormous diversity of these educational activities, it is obvious that certain core areas, typological units, constituting the mainstream of the latest developments can be identified. In addition, the typology helps to capture and understand better the thematic links and orientation, including the ways of making these educational and training programmes integral parts of college and university curricula.

The second important aspect associated with the last two special issues of the journal is the very dimension of the process of establishing DDR study programmes in the academic setting. It is a remarkable phenomenon which, we believe, has gained a momentum by the creation of the ICUDDR through enhancing mutual communication and networking between these specialist establishments. This inevitably improves cooperation, especially as regards the exchange and sharing of experience with the development and operation of such study programmes, the scaling-up of collaboration in research and development and furthering both research and education goals through student and faculty exchange example. Both of the last two issues of the journal present the first results of some university teams and thus provide inspiration for other institutions. Moreover, as a journal published in association with the ICUDDR, we are sending a clear message of invitation for other workplaces to become involved. Offering a shared publishing platform facilitating this trend, the *Addictology* journal aspires to enhance applied research and bridge the gap between the academic setting and practice.

The third aspect involved in both of the special issues is the goal of improving the linkage between practice and research through partnership between this journal and the International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP). It is a critical moment in the development of the journal and has, of course, a strong symbolic value. Our close link to the largest global professional organisation brings along with it not only a major commitment, but also, indeed, an emphasis on the practical implications of our efforts. In addition, it generates a new quality in the partnership between research and practice, with the journal as a specific communication channel. The contents of both issues also show how closely linked and complementary some of the educational and training products are. This is aptly expressed in, for example, the paper on the UPC Core (Hein et al., 2022). The new trends and specialist programmes thus build upon a deeply rooted tradition that seems to have been overlooked for many years. In the previous issue, this is reflected in a case study of one of the oldest academic programmes in Europe, established at the University of Barcelona (Ferrer et al., 2021). In addition to our supporters and partners already mentioned in the previous editorial, as guest editors, we would both like to express our special thanks to all our practitioner colleagues who actively contributed to this special issue. Our joint effort produced an impressive collection of studies reflecting the latest developments in the field and the work of the ICUDDR and ISSUP which justify the hope that the interface between the academic programmes and their teams on the one hand and evaluation studies and research on the other hand will continue and intensify. We believe that before long such liaison will provide the basis for further rigorous studies and captivating articles, published not only in our joint journal, *Addictology*, but, of course, in other specialist addiction periodicals. This will also bring to fruition the original idea of developing cooperation with the ISAJE and the work on the first joint initiative fostered by Professor Richard Saitz, the ISAJE president at the time.

Prague and Tampa

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