



Introduction to the inaugural issue of the WCPR Review

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I have always paid a great deal of attention to the way in which events build up over time. At times, scientific events seem to appear out of the blue and then develop into operative realities requiring great professional commitment with unpredictable speed, even if they arise from remote circumstances and feed upon the work, the perseverance and the expectations of a host of people.

This is exactly what happened when the *World Association of Cultural Psychiatry* (WACP) and the *World Cultural Psychiatry Research Review* (WCPR *Review*) were founded.

As you might already know, the WACP is now a substantial reality in the international scientific scenario. Many of you have directly witnessed the founding phases and others might want to track its development, aims and expectations either in the mission statement published on our Website or in our Newsletters.

As from the very beginning, it immediately became evident that, in addition to publishing the *WACP Newsletter*, a necessary instrument through which to provide continuous information on facts that are relevant for the Association, it would also be necessary to adopt an instrument that might enable us to quickly publish all the scientific works written by the numerous scholars involved in cultural psychiatry disciplines.

In order to meet the task of promoting Cultural Psychiatry, we decided to endow ourselves with a rigorously professional medium such as might be represented by a WACP official journal, this *WCPR Review* that is now being introduced to you by our President.

Today, thanks to this inaugural issue, the *WCPR Review* shall expedite its activities aimed at providing continuous information, and online access through the Website.

The availability of renowned papers, support reviews on issues relating to Cultural Psychiatry, and to Medical and Cultural Anthropology, which already represent an excellent source of reference for trans-cultural disciplines, spurred us to put in place an extremely flexible online Review, that might collect in real time, and help publish a large number of works by colleagues wishing to share their experiences with a wider public, not only through scientifically rigorous work but also through the communication modes and expressions that are typical of the cultural background of every author.

How many times have we seen emotionally captivating articles being refused because they were deemed to be either too subjective or overly *emic*?

However, let it be clear that the *WCPR Review* does not intend to water down the scientific content of the articles it publishes, each one of us is fully aware that our Code of Ethics requires us

to strictly limit our work to disclosing only carefully evaluated and scientifically tested information.

We are convinced that the work of our colleagues is worthy of being disseminated, debated and discussed both as original papers and in the form of preliminary communications, summaries and reviews. It does not matter to us if the Authors have not had the time to track down entire sets of figures or if they only relied on randomised controlled trials in their research work. The work and effort that go into the observation of new and complex phenomena is unfailingly profitable. This is exactly the work we want to encourage: clinical inference, albeit associated with the need to verify the effectiveness of the healing intervention.

Moreover, an online Review enables a quick connection network at lower costs than those required for paper Reviews, facilitates the dissemination and interlinking of different scientific contributions which, as they come from different parts of the world, deserve to be safeguarded in view of their cultural specificity.

More specifically, it is our opinion that the opportunity of reviewing articles already published locally but that have not found their way into international publications is the best possible way of realizing a type of forum of opinions that we all support.

The proposed model made us opt for a Review of the type used in the *Transcultural Psychiatry Research Review* edited by Prince which many of us have used as our source of training.

In my capacity as the first Editor-in- Chief of *WCPR Review*, I am ready to shoulder the responsibility that has been entrusted to me. Indeed, I have been assigned quite a task, not only of collecting and publishing the work of authors who have already finalized their research project in the form of a paper ready for publication, but also of facilitating a dialogue of high scientific standing, and of promoting connections between authors so that they might identify with a forum aimed at effectively integrating points of view, that are as nuanced in their existential heritage.

I hope that you might agree with me in defining this task as *fascinans* but at the same time *tremendum*. In order to fulfil the task assigned to me, I have undertaken the commitment, with the support of the other founding officials, to establish an Editorial Committee, a supporting staff for the Managing Editor, which might maintain contacts without dispersing communication, an Executive Editor who might coordinate the work and present it to the international community. Each one of these has been entrusted with specific tasks and only through the efficient functioning of all these levels will it be possible to assure the success of the initiative.

It proved to be quite a challenge for me to create a Rome-based team capable of assisting me in the performance of my tasks. However, thanks to the collaboration of enthusiastic young colleagues who accepted to work without remuneration, I succeeded in creating the “container” needed to push the project through. Now it is up to each and every one of us to develop the contents to fill it with.

Today’s issue contains a Call for Action addressed to all those who might want to contribute their works, especially reviews and brief reports on local realities. To this effect, I would like to invite all those wanting to make a contribution to read the Instructions for Authors so that they might comply with the guidelines thus helping make the editorial framework of reference as homogeneous as possible.

Upon making the first invitations to Authors to contribute to *WCPR Review* inaugural issue, I was not surprised to find out that it is easier to collect original papers rather than reviews on local realities, as original papers are the fruit of personal work and therefore people tend to be more keen to present it to the public, while reviews and reports on local realities are not as satisfying. This has once again highlighted the fact that the success of a journal like the *WCPR Review*

EDITORIAL

depends on an asset that is becoming increasingly rare among professionals: committing their time to activities that only pay back in the long run.

Having only now launched a Call for Papers makes it self-evident that this first issue contains contributions from the members of the Editorial Board who I would like to thank for having responded so promptly thus compensating us for all our efforts. In actual fact, we received such a large number of contributions that it was impossible to include them all in this first issue as I would have liked to do. This issue opens with an introduction by Raymond Prince which is published in an unedited version. Prince's personal considerations represent a scientific Bio-sketch that perfectly succeeds in shedding light on who we are and what we intend to do and especially on that typical characteristic of ours that makes us flexible and anti-dogmatic. You will notice that there is a new Section, *Images in Cultural Psychiatry*. In attending different conferences, I had the opportunity of seeing all the images that all of you presented and I therefore had the idea of putting up a virtual stage which would make it possible to combine images with words. However, as I failed to launch a Call for Images in due time, I decided to fill in the space myself so as not to leave it empty. Thanks to the collaboration provided by the Editorial Board and also to the contributions that might issue from the Call for Papers, I hope to avoid being overly present in the upcoming issues.

At the forthcoming *First World Congress of Cultural Psychiatry* in Beijing we shall gather any proposal you might want to make and we shall be happy to specifically find a way of dealing with emerging issues requiring immediate consideration. In this respect, it is easy to notice that all international conferences in Psychiatry are increasingly dealing with issues associated with Cultural Psychiatry. WACP epistemological statute embraces a very wide scope of knowledge covering all the topics now debated. In the forefront, as usual, surveys on the condition of immigrants and refugees; problems arising from the acculturation process; old and new pathologies; the organization of culturally sensitive public health services both in developing and in advanced countries; the comparison between different psychiatric epistemologies; cultural psychiatry training curricula and many others.

So let's get the ball rolling!

I, on my part, feel very confident as I am surrounded by colleagues who will certainly leave their mark on all of the Review's activities. So, in addition to thanking the Advisors and the members of the Editorial Board, I would like to extend a special thanks to all those who will physically toil in the Editorial office. Rachid Bennegadi and his group, and Simon Dein for adding his finishing touches to the Review's issues. I would also like to express a special acknowledgement to Vittorio De Luca who unfailingly persevered in very precarious initial conditions and without whom I sincerely doubt that this issue would ever have been published in time. Lastly, the adhesion of Andrea Eligi and a group of trainees in psychiatry from the University of Rome, allowed us to draw upon a think tank capable of elaborating together all the incoming proposals.

I think we have done our share in creating the framework for both younger and older colleagues who might want to contribute their trans-cultural hues to the monochromatic picture of Western Psychiatry. We are convinced that this is the only possible way of correctly matching the cultural nuances of our patients.

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