

# WPA Scientific Sections

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WPA Secretary for Sections

WPA Sections (current number is 68) are the scientific backbone of the WPA. They promote and disseminate scientific knowledge, covering practically every aspect of psychiatry and enjoying a great degree of independence within the framework of the WPA Statutes and By-Laws. Over the years, with able leadership of their officers, the Sections have provided valuable and exceptional additions to the scientific knowledge in psychiatry and allied fields.

More specifically, the purposes of the Sections, in accordance with the existing WPA By-Laws, are the collection, analysis, presentation and dissemination of information concerning services, research and training in the various fields of psychiatry and mental health and the advancement of scientific knowledge in these fields.

The Sections achieve these purposes by: a) establishment of working relations with national and international organizations with a view to achieving better coordination of activities of interest to the Section and the WPA; b) organization of scientific meetings and symposia on topics of specialized interest to the Section; c) organization of educational activities dealing with the Section's specialty at different WPA meetings; d) development of educational programs, guidelines, publications and proposals for adoption as WPA consensus and position statements; e) promotion and conduction of international collaborative research.

The Sections hold elections every three years to elect their office bearers. Clustering of Sections, on the basis of common interests and activities, is encouraged with an objective to promote collaboration, produce consensus or position statements, organize joint scientific activities within WPA and other scientific organizations. The activity and productivity of each Section (e.g., symposia, publications, edu-

cational programs and consensus statements) are regularly evaluated by the Secretary for Sections and the Executive Committee. The section work is supported by an Operational Committee, which includes experienced members of WPA offering valuable guidance (C.R. Soldatos, M. Amering, S. Harvey and T.E. Schlaepfer).

Following the current triennium action plan, all Sections have continued with their excellent work and promising contributions in many areas of mental health. During 2012, 16 WPA co-sponsored meetings were organized by different Sections, and from January to June 2013, 12 meetings have already taken place. There has been an increased interest in joint working and, in addition to Sections organizing their own sessions, joint sessions are proposed at scientific meetings (28 sessions at the Prague International Congress in 2012; 8 sessions at the Athens Thematic Conference in 2012; 9 sessions at the Athens meeting and 6 sessions at the Bucharest meeting in 2013). Organization of intersectional forums is the new addition to promote collaboration among Sections' work. Topics like education, stigma and suicide were chosen for these forums, that have been held at WPA conferences.

Various Sections (e.g., Dual Diagnosis, HIV Psychiatry, and Education in Psychiatry) have also produced documents and recommendations in their respective fields. Sections on Addiction and Public Policy have recently set up a joint group for the establishment of an Intersectional Initiative (ISI) for Addiction and Concurrent Disorders among Vulnerable Urban Populations.

WPA Sections are actively participating in the development of the chapter on mental disorders of the 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases (see 1-3) and WPA Section officers are providing a variety of contributions to *World Psychiatry* (e.g., 4-10).

It is hoped that the current enthusiasm in Section work will lead further contributions to the quality of scientific knowledge and development of innovative approaches in psychiatric care for our patients. This is indeed a promising trend that brings specialized expertise to the WPA membership and updates their knowledge and understanding of current professional needs.

## References

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