

News from WPA Scientific Sections

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WPA Scientific Sections (current number is 68) continue playing an active part in the promotion and dissemination of scientific knowledge in different domains of psychiatry. Their work practically covers almost all aspects of our profession – from theory to practice, from clinical work to academic excellence, and from developing educational guidelines to service provision directions.

Sections enjoy a degree of independence within the framework of the WPA Statutes and By-Laws and it is heartening to note that, over the last many years, they have achieved an important position in WPA work. Their leaders are world renowned experts in their respective areas of expertise and have contributed to the promotion of psychiatry across many disciplines in mental health and allied fields.

According to the WPA By-Laws, Sections are required to highlight the current progress, analyse and disseminate information concerning their areas of know-how in research, education, teaching and training, and build ideas and suggestions for service provision. It is worth noting that the Sections have achieved these objectives by undertaking a number of activities, including organization of scientific meetings and symposia on topics of specialized interest to the professionals; organization of educational activities at different WPA meetings; development of educational programmes, guidelines, publications and proposals for adoption as WPA consensus and position statements, and conduction of international collaborative research.

During the current triennium, 36 WPA co-sponsored meetings have been organized by different Sections. Sections' presence has witnessed a prominence at WPA sponsored and co-sponsored meetings, with a total of 60 sessions. Moreover, organization of

intersectional forums is the new addition to promote collaboration among Sections' work. Topics of education and suicide were chosen for these forums, that have been held at WPA conferences in Bucharest (Romania) and Vienna (Austria) during 2013. In addition to this, Sections have organized 19 educational programmes and courses, produced 9 guidelines, and published 28 books or monographs.

Sections' functioning is supervised by the Secretary for Sections and the Executive Committee and also supported by an Operational Committee, which includes experienced members of WPA offering valuable assistance (C.R. Soldatos, M. Amering, S. Harvey and T.E. Schlaepfer). At an organizational level, Sections regularly have their business meetings and hold elections every three years to elect their office bearers. Inclusion of new members to their list is also very encouraging and almost all Sections are getting interest from young psychiatrists.

The WPA has been improving its organizational image and identity in line with its Action Plans of 2008-2011 and 2011-2014. The official website of the WPA, along with its other media channels (WPA News, the official WPA newsletter, and the WPA E-Bulletin) has played an important role in this process. WPA Sections are very well represented on the website (1) and those other channels.

Several WPA Section experts are involved in the development of the ICD-11 and the relevant field trials. The work contributing to the process of harmonization between the ICD-11 and the DSM-5 is also assisted by many experts who are active members of various WPA sections (2-6). WPA Section members also continue contributing to *World Psychiatry*, the official journal of WPA, on different topics of current interest (7-13).

Future directions for Sections work include clustering of Sections on the basis of common interests and activities. It is hoped that the current enthu-

siasm in Section work will also lead further inputs to the excellence of scientific knowledge and innovations in psychiatric care practices for our patients. This certainly requires specialized expertise and it is anticipated that the current leadership of the Sections will be able to offer valuable guidance to the profession.

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