

prevention and treatment of mental ill health and the promotion of mental health¹², matched with the purposes of WPA. They will be supported by activities in a range of topics important to the future of psychiatry and improved mental health for women, men and children around the world.

These plans gain momentum from the international attention focused on the need to include both the health of women (and children)⁸ and mental health¹³ among the new sustainable development goals. The WPA can contribute to the

establishment and achievement of these goals in low- and middle-income countries, and equivalent initiatives among disadvantaged groups in high-income settings. My colleagues and I are eager to receive comments and suggestions about how, together, we can develop these programs.

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WPA Scientific Sections: update on the activities

Scientific Sections are coming up as an essential component of WPA and play a pivotal role in promoting and disseminating scientific knowledge around the globe. The current number of Sections has increased to 72, with Sections on Positive Psychiatry, Stress Research, and Early Career Psychiatrists as the new ones approved during 2015. Inclusion of Early Career Psychiatrists is proving an important step towards involvement of young psychiatrists in the WPA functioning as well as for developing their leadership skills and enhancing their organizational abilities.

As Sections keep on having their elections every three years, it is encouraging to note that new and younger members are getting elected for officer positions. This indeed reflects their keen desire and enthusiasm for their future contributions towards WPA's work. The Sections' Operational Committee is currently reviewing the by-laws related to Sections' functioning and is going to submit its recommendations to the Planning Committee. There have also been some discussions on Sections' future work, including clustering of Sections on the basis of common interests and activities. This will hopefully help to promote further collaboration and links among Sections.

During the years 2014-2015, there has been a noticeable increase in the num-

ber of WPA co-sponsored meetings, joint intersectional activities and other related intersectional accomplishments^{1,2}. Scientific Sections have also continued developing training courses and producing position statements. Noteworthy among the latter is the Position Statement on Spirituality and Religion in Psychiatry, published in the February 2016 issue of *World Psychiatry*³.

The WPA Action Plan for 2014-2017^{4,5} has been another focal point for many Sections' activities during this triennium. Sections have adapted the theme of promotion of mental health as a priority in their work, along with initiating various programmes in the areas of mental health promotion and prevention psychiatry by producing educational materials for the WPA website.

Intersectional collaboration has continued to be a focused activity for a number of Sections during the current triennium. Organization of Intersectional Forums and Intersectional Educational Programmes has been an ongoing practice at WPA Regional and International Conferences held in Romania, Taiwan and Philippines, and similar activities are planned for the forthcoming meetings in Turkey and South Africa during this year.

Section officers and members are also contributing extensively to the WPA official journal *World Psychiatry*⁶⁻¹³. Their

interest and participation in the development of the chapter on mental disorders of the ICD-11 is another ongoing contribution to the psychiatric field¹⁴⁻¹⁷.

Programmes promoting the interest of medical students in the field of psychiatry as a future career have also been a focus for the current work of Sections. Sections on Education and Early Career Psychiatrists, in particular, have been involved in formulating a plan with the following remit: a) to prepare a WPA statement on "Promoting psychiatry as an inspiring medical speciality and introducing psychiatry as a prospective future career for medical students"; b) to set up programmes for promotion of psychiatry in undergraduate medical education, exploring innovative ways of engaging medical students in psychiatry and collating examples of good practice; c) to prepare general educational materials for medical students introducing psychiatry as an essential medical discipline; d) to prepare an outline of the topics that need to be incorporated in the undergraduate curricula. It is expected that this work will be completed and highlighted in the scientific deliberations of 2016 WPA International Conferences, with a proposed round table discussion in Cape Town on developments in this area.

It is anticipated that the current enthusiasm of Sections' leadership and

their dedicated work will continue adding further contributions to the progress of scientific knowledge and the development of innovative approaches in psychiatric practice.

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