

## From the Editor's desk

By Kamaldeep Bhui CBE

### Hope, freedom and new directions in psychiatric research

#### Publishing power

The New Year begins with a new partnership between the Royal College of Psychiatrists and Cambridge University Press, signalling our shared commitment to excellence in research and scholarship for patient impact. Readers will also have noticed the launch of the Psychiatry Ashes, a friendly competition between the editorial boards of the *BJPsych* and the *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* on research impact.<sup>1,2</sup> We hope to raise the profile of the use of psychiatric research, and at the same time shed some light on the nature of mental health problems among performers in the sports and arts, and performance in the professions, including psychiatrists, psychologists and mental health carers.

#### Treatment-resistant mood disorders: call for papers

Treatment-resistant mood disorders continue to be one of the most significant challenges in clinical care; there are significant obstacles to recovery in unipolar depression and comorbid depression with schizophrenia or borderline personality disorder.<sup>3–8</sup> I am making a call for papers on treatment-resistant mood disorders. How can we better identify the best treatment for specific patient groups, and marshal the multiple emerging novel interventions (neuromodulatory, pharmacological, psychological) alongside repurposing of existing drug and psychological therapies? A summary of the importance of treatment-resistant mood disorders is highlighted in an important analysis by McAllister-Williams *et al*, which will be published in the journal in 2018.

Please submit your best research on effective interventions by 1 May 2018. We hope to publish the best submissions following peer review in a themed issue in January 2019.

#### New research

Hope and optimism are essential ingredients of recovery and are included in a new measure of quality of life (Bressan *et al*, pp. 1–3;

Boardman pp. 4–5, Keetharuth *et al*, pp. 42–49). New screening procedures are proposed for postnatal depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Howard *et al*, pp. 50–56; Zammit *et al*, pp. 11–18). A better understanding is emerging on the phenotypes of 5-hydroxytryptamine mechanisms in Prader–Willi syndrome (Krishnadas *et al*, pp. 57–58) and developmental coordination disorder (Cunningham *et al*, pp. 27–33). Electroconvulsive therapy is shown to increase hippocampal and amygdala volumes.

Common innovations in care and therapies that we take for granted are not available globally. A courageous study shows that chaining remains a common practice in a prayer camp in Ghana (Ofori-Atta *et al*, pp. 34–41). Chaining does not seem to reflect the levels of symptoms, rather stigma and traditions of practice may be driving this practice. The meaning of hope and optimism that we promote in high-income countries are of course deeply inadequate when considering chaining of people with mental illnesses. Ethical and human rights mandates need careful thought (Hughes pp. 9–10; Patel & Bhui, pp. 6–8) and actions that can bring minimum standards of humane care to these venues.

- 1 Bhui KC, Malhi GS. The Psychiatry Ashes: I can't believe it's not cricket! *Br J Psychiatry* 2017; **211**: 406.
- 2 Malhi GS, Bhui K. The psychiatry ashes: it's not cricket! *Aust N Z J Psychiatry* 2017; **51**: 1173–5.
- 3 Gregory A, Mallikarjun P, Upthegrove R. Treatment of depression in schizophrenia: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Br J Psychiatry* 2017; **211**: 198–204.
- 4 Akil H, Gordon J, Hen R, et al. Treatment resistant depression: a multi-scale, systems biology approach. *Neurosci Biobehav Rev* 30 Aug 2017 (doi: 10.1016/j.neubiorev.2017.08.019).
- 5 Zhou C, Zhang H, Qin Y, Tian T, Xu B, Chen J, et al. A systematic review and meta-analysis of deep brain stimulation in treatment-resistant depression. *Prog Neuropsychopharmacol Biol Psychiatry* 13 Nov 2017 (doi: 10.1016/j.pnpbp.2017.11.012).
- 6 Papadimitropoulou K, Vossen C, Karabis A, Donatti C, Kubitz N. Comparative efficacy and tolerability of pharmacological and somatic interventions in adult patients with treatment-resistant depression: a systematic review and network meta-analysis. *Curr Med Res Opin* 2017; **33**: 701–11.
- 7 Gobbi G, Ghabrash MF, Nunez N, Tabaka J, Di Sante J, Saint-Laurent M, et al. Antidepressant combination versus antidepressants plus second-generation antipsychotic augmentation in treatment-resistant unipolar depression. *Int Clin Psychopharmacol* 2018; **33**: 34–43.
- 8 French LRM, Turner KM, Dawson S, Moran P. Psychological treatment of depression and anxiety in patients with co-morbid personality disorder: a scoping study of trial evidence. *Personal Ment Health* 2017; **11**: 101–17.