

DANUBIAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION: BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

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The people of the Danube region share a common historical experience, from time to time very difficult and tragic ones, affecting every aspects of life involving science, medicine and psychiatry. The World War II, the Cold War and Iron Curtain, military intervention in Czechoslovakia 1968, the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and now the war in Ukraine, which is in some way a clash of civilizations, have been and still are great challenges for psychiatry and public and global mental health. The Danubian Psychiatric Association (DPA) has entered 60th year of its existence which makes it older than the European Psychiatric Association, the main and the most important association representing psychiatry in Europe, founded in 1983. At the very beginning DPA emerged as a “Curatorium”, a working group for the biennial organization of Danube Symposia of Psychiatry (DSP) in the period of the Iron Curtain. The founding members of the Curatorium, Prof. Dr. Hans Hoff and Prof. Dr. Gustav Hofmann from Vienna, and Prof. Dr. Ernest Guensberger and Prof. Dr. Jan Molčan from Bratislava worked to establish communication and cooperation between psychiatrists and scientists of related disciplines of medicine in the divided Europe (Hofmann 1989). The European political changes during 1989/1990 inspired “Curatorium” 1994 to transform itself into an association with 16 member countries. Psychiatrists from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldavia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine have been included in activities of DPA (see also Hofmann 2003). The DPA journal *Psychiatria Danubina* (PD) was created in 1989 and since that time has been published regularly on a quarterly basis. Fortunately, since 1964 the idea of a rotating system in the DSP organization, every time in another country, has successfully continued till the present time.

On its heroic journey DPA has opened up a new chapter in the history of psychiatry and mental health sciences in Central-Eastern Europe. DSP are organized according to the principles of global “learning organization”, the concept of collective intelligence, and the culture of empathy. Through all its history DPA has promoted the integrative spirit of the founding members bridging different world views, different cultures, ideologies, frames of references. The conceptual change from blockbuster

medicine and stratified medicine to precision, person-centered medicine opens up new possibilities in psychiatry for bringing the old dream of “the right care and treatment to the right person at the right time” into reality. From 18th to 20th March 2021, the 29th Danubian Psychiatric Symposium with the topic “Psychiatry, Medicine and Society: Homo Deus of the 21st Century and Challenges of Mental Health and Personalized Medicine” was held in the virtual format. Four multidisciplinary sessions were organized within the symposium with challenging topics: 1. Comorbidity, resilience, and epigenetics in psychiatry from the perspective of predictive, preventive, participatory and person centered medicine; 2. Transdisciplinary integrative approach in psychiatry, personalized medicine, and creative psychopharmacotherapy; 3. Psychiatry, spirituality and religion from the perspective of public and global mental health; 4. Psychiatry, ethics and politics from the perspective of public and global mental health. Selected papers were published in the four parts of the PD, vol. 33 (suppl 4), 2021. The 30th Danubian Psychiatric Symposium with the topic “ICD-11 and Creative Pharmacotherapy in Psychiatry: Challenges and perspectives” was successfully organized in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina from October 28-30, 2022. Abstracts were published in the PD, vol. 34 (suppl 9), 2022.

DPA is affiliated member of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) and this year, within the World Congress of Psychiatry in Vienna, we have a great honor and privilege to talk about the Danubian Psychiatric Association between the Past and the Future. Psychiatry today is a very complex and evolving branch of medicine in which findings, paradigms and achievements of various neurobiological, psychological and sociological sciences, as well as art, philosophy and religion have their theoretical, practical and therapeutic application. Through PD in its transdisciplinary and holodigmatic integrative spirit, DPA, as a collective member of the World Psychiatric Association will continue to encourage different branches and fields of psychiatry to creatively meet each other and other mental health promoting disciplines for our better world and Global Mental Health Enlightenment 2.0 (Jakovljevic 2021, 2022, 2023). Last, but not least, in this hard times it is wise to have in mind the Viktor Frankl’s quote: “For the world is in a bad state, but everything will become still worse unless each of us does his best. So, let

us be alert – alert in a twofold sense: since Auschwitz, we know what man is capable of. And since Hiroshima we know what is at stake”. The crucial message of this editorial is that we should ponder and reexamine our basic understanding and definitions of individual, public and

global mental health as well as collective psychopathology. Transformative culture of empathy with reason, science and humanism is a background for mental health promotion and empathic civilization instead of wars and clash of civilizations.

References:

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