

# Editorial: International perspectives in public mental health

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Neil Quinn

**W**elcome to this issue, which covers a fascinating range of public mental health issues and interventions across a range of country contexts. In these papers, we see promising innovations in public mental health practice.

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Our first paper by Julia Terry and Cathie Robins-Talbot explores the application of mental health first aid with Deaf communities in Wales. During the project, nine MHFA™ courses were delivered to Deaf communities across different locations in Wales, often with information and advertisements circulated direct to Deaf communities through Deaf clubs, resulting in 120 Deaf people trained. This original paper draws on the experience of delivering the MHFA programme, including reflections from the MHFA trainer, and discusses the specific risks for Deaf people around mental health and the importance of mental health promotion programs for Deaf communities.

The second paper by Gebremeskel Mesafint, Nigusie Shifera and Alamayehu Sayih aimed to assess the prevalence of domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated factors in Bench Sheko zone in Southwest Ethiopia. A community-based cross-sectional study was conducted with over 1,500 women. The paper identified several risk factors and concluded that domestic violence against women is still an important public health problem in Ethiopia and special attention should be paid to identified predictors to reduce domestic violence.

The third paper by Corey Dillon and Oscar Noel Ocho is on the sociocultural impact of COVID-19 on registered nurses employed at a regional health authority in Trinidad. The study found nurses on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced stigmatisation, discrimination and reduced income, encountering negative sociocultural experiences from a personal, social and professional perspective. The main implication of the study is the need to develop context-specific programmes and policies to support health professionals.

The next paper by Tyler Prochnow and Meg Patterson looks at the important issue of the impact of online gaming on mental health. This study examines associations between social capital derived from online versus in-person networks and mental health indicators among gamers. Online gamers ( $n = 301$ ) completed an online survey assessing their social networks (both in-person and through online gaming) and mental health indicators (depressive symptoms, anxiety, social isolation and perceived social support). The study found that in-person network characteristics showed the strongest associations with mental health outcomes. Greater average closeness and frequent confiding in the in-person network predicted lower isolation and fewer depressive symptoms. There were also mental health benefits from online networks, but less than in-person networks. The study reinforces the importance of face-to-face relationships for emotional well-being and suggests the importance of helping gamers cultivate close bonds offline.

The following paper by Jenny Burns is a fascinating study of the experiences of charity peer leaders facilitating well-being interventions to their peers using a constructivist grounded theory methodology. The study focuses on two specific groups of people: new mothers and refugees, using in-depth interviews and phone calls to gather data from the delivery of well-being interventions using a modelled training approach. The findings generated a theory representing the “journey” the peer leaders took, with their lived experience triggering empathic feelings towards their peers which motivated them to build a rapport and led to them feeling rewarded. This highly innovative study generated a theory which has the potential to support future mental health peer work.

The final paper from Farman Abdullah in Iraq investigates the prevalence of cosmetic surgery and its relationship with the level of mental health and socio-economic variables in Sulaimania, Iraq. This descriptive-analytical study found the prevalence of mental disorders was significantly higher among people with a history of cosmetic surgery. In particular, gender and previous mental health status were important variables, which affected outcomes for people undergoing cosmetic surgery.

We hope you enjoy this thought-provoking and insightful Issue, which we believe will stimulate further research in these important aspects of public mental health.

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