

Editorial

Julian Ashton

Rio [...] Kyoto [...] Copenhagen [...] Paris [...] these could make part of the itinerary of a superstar tour, but they are now well known as the series of global meetings on climate change. As each of these milestones has passed, public concern for the environment has increased (though there is not necessarily any connection between one and the other). The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow could be a crucial turning point. Caring for nature and the environment is a strong theme of the (virtual) interview with Ambra Burls. She maintains that as psychological benefits are derived from our interaction with nature, a reciprocal relationship with the environment is essential, but this is very often not the case. As well as benefits for the individual, she describes positive and inclusive changes in communities working together in local parks, gardens and countryside: it is a reminder that we are all part of local ecosystems. The lyrics of Joni Mitchell, in *Big Yellow Taxi*, “They took all the trees, put them in a tree museum” have become a reality, as that it is what those who have exploited Rosewood in S.E. Asia have done: put Rosewood trees in a tree museum (BBC Radio, recording no longer available).

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Lamia Hague & Robert Rosenhach have analysed a vast amount of data from the US Veteran Health Administration, from 2012, to explore relationships between receipt of mental health treatment, substance use disorders and homelessness. There were also connections with a service record in Iraq and/or Afghanistan: those with that record were more likely to have been recently homeless or be in receipt of treatment for drug dependence. “How does it feel, to be on your own, with no direction home, like a rolling stone?” (Bob Dylan, *Like a Rolling Stone*).

The authors from British Columbia and Northern Ireland, McGivern, Shannon & Breslin, have investigated the aftereffects of concussion sustained in the course of horse-riding, through responses gathered from five countries. There was evidence of higher depression scores than normal, for some time after the incident. This reflects the current attention to medium- to long-term effects of minor head injury in a range of other sports. However, the main result contrasted with some positive findings about resilience and well-being. “He felt an emptiness inside to which he just could not relate, brought on by a simple twist of fate.” (Bob Dylan, *Simple Twist of Fate*).

From Ethiopia, the study by Mekonnen Tsehay and colleagues, examined whether adolescents with a lower Dietary Diversity Score were more likely to show depressive symptoms, and results showed that was the case; and there were further interesting outcomes from following a varied diet. “Variety is the spice of life,” (William Cowper, *The Task*). In the UK, only around 30% of adults regularly have five-a-day, fruit and vegetables.

The question of whether an established psychometric test is valid in different cultures is a perennial one, and it is addressed by a team from the University of Sousse in Tunisia, with input from Patrick Corrigan at Illinois Institute of Technology. Their study is on assessing stigma with the Attribution Questionnaire, in relation to psychosis. Briefly, the Arabic version works as well as the English. This is important, as it enables it to be used in Tunisia and other Arab-speaking populations.

A crowd of people turned away

But I just had to look

Having read the book [...] (Lennon & McCartney, *A Day in the Life*).

A team from L'Université de Tunis carried out a study examining the differing perception of the rights of people with mental illness, among service users, their families and psychiatric staff. For some of the rights there was quite widespread lack of knowledge, so by publishing these results, a gradual change might come about. "Take a look at the lawman, beating up the wrong guy". (David Bowie, *Is there life on Mars?*)

COVID-19 has affected every country in the world, but the psychological impact, and factors influencing uptake of the vaccine, varies widely. Hawa Iye Obaje and the team in Rwanda have studied this area, with a representative sample of students. A notable finding was that while most respondents were aware of their vulnerability to the virus, they did not see themselves at risk of becoming infected. This tends to apply to younger age groups in the UK and other countries.

A systematic review of the possible benefits to people with depression, of arts and cultural activities, has been carried out by Esme Elsdon from University College London and Brenda Roe from Edge Hill University. We have published relevant studies on this subject, e.g. [Jensen and Torrissen \(2019\)](#); however, the review found only a small number of studies that fitted the criteria. These gave some evidence for a positive effect. I believe that, like the interaction with nature in the first article, these activities can enable people to discover themselves, and see things afresh:

"The end of our exploring will be to arrive at where we started and know the place for the first time," T.S. [Eliot \(1942\)](#).

References

Eliot, T.S. (1942), *Little Gidding*.

Jensen, A. and Torrissen, W. (2019), "Aesthetic engagement as health and wellbeing promotion", *Journal of Public Mental Health*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 240-247, doi: [10.1108/JPMH-11-2018-0080](https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-11-2018-0080).

Further reading

Cowper, W. (1785), *The Task*.

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