



## Message from the President



March 2019

Colleagues

Since writing to you in January, much has happened in our world. We have celebrated highs, like International Women's Day (IWD) and Harmony Day, and we have experienced lows – like the recent terrorist attack in New Zealand and cyclone in Mozambique. I know that my WPA colleagues join me in extending heartfelt sympathies to all those affected by the latter two tragedies.

It is during these times that the importance – and value – of psychiatry comes to the fore. Positive events like IWD allow us an opportunity to highlight some of the important work we've done for women and girls, such as the development of a [Curriculum on Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence](#) (available in ten languages on the WPA website). Events like those in New Zealand and Mozambique emphasise how important it is for psychiatrists to be equipped to offer mental health support to those in crisis and living under conditions of extreme stress. Both issues are a key focus of the 2017-2020 WPA Action Plan.

Recently, I was pleased to visit Sydney for the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Asian Psychiatry. It was the final event of WPA President Elect, Afzal Javed's successful term as President of AFPA (The Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations) and the official handover of the presidency to Professor Mal Hopwood. Following that, I visited Geneva for work with WPA committees and our diligent secretariat; this also included a productive meeting with Dr Devora Kestel, newly appointed Director of the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse. From Geneva, it was a short hop to Paris for the 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Women's Mental Health and the celebration of IWD. I was privileged to then visit Havana for the IX Cuban Congress of Psychiatry where I was hosted by WPA member society President Miriam de la Osa O'Reilly (and colleagues) and had the opportunity to see the dedicated work of psychiatrists in community and general hospital settings. During the quarter, I also had the chance to work with colleagues in Nairobi and Bogota to continue our development of WPA's collaborative program with citiesRISE.

Coming up, I have visits to Warsaw, Poland for the EPA Congress, and Ohrid, Republic of North Macedonia for our own [WPA Thematic Congress on Dementia](#). I very much hope to see some of you at the Congress in Ohrid for a special scientific and cultural experience, and I'm looking forward to sharing news of both events in my next update.

I'm also excited about the developing program of the 19<sup>th</sup> WPA World Congress of Psychiatry in Lisbon. We had an overwhelming number of high-quality proposals this year, and it's been

no easy task determining which to include in the schedule. We recognise the disappointment felt by those whose submissions missed out, but I want to emphasise it was the sheer quantity of submissions that forced us to turn down so many – and certainly not a lack of quality. The upside is that we have been able to put together an outstanding program of symposia that covers a particularly broad range of topics – and this means even more opportunities for learning! I encourage anyone planning to come to register as soon as possible so you don't miss out on earlybird rates. It's also worth noting that the beautiful weather in Lisbon in August makes it a popular holiday destination, so be sure to book your travel and accommodation as soon as you can too.

Last, but not least, I want to provide you an update on the new WPA website. In my January message I promised it would be launched within weeks; I know that hasn't happened and I wanted to explain why. As is so often the case with projects of this magnitude – the time it takes to get everything right can be underestimated. Our current website contains a huge volume of valuable information, much of it provided by you through the Sections, publications and the work of your member societies. But it's not always easy to find. As we have worked, we have discovered even more information than we were expecting. Some of it will need to be archived, but much of it will be moved to its new home on the new site. Either way, we don't want to lose it! And so the work continues. We feel it is more important to get the site right than to get it launched by a self-imposed due date – we hope when you see it, you'll agree. Watch this space!

I look forward to being in touch again soon.

Best wishes

Helen  
WPA President