

## Funding

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## Declaration of interest

D.S. is Editor in Chief of *BJPsych International*.

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# Professor David Skuse: a gentleman and a scholar

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**Stepping down after a decade of service as editor of this journal, this brief testimonial recognises the pivotal contributions made by Professor David Skuse and highlights his stellar career achievements as an academic.**

After a decade of success, David Skuse is stepping down as Editor-in-Chief of the *BJPsych International*. I cannot claim that I know David well, but perhaps I can say I know him well enough, as I have certainly known of him for a while through my dealings with the Royal College of Psychiatrists and its journals, and everyone who does know David well speaks of him highly and wishes him well, as do I.

Achieving such favour in any walk of life is no mean feat, even at the best of times, but this is especially the case in relation to the role of Editor-in-Chief of a psychiatric journal, a position that seldom increases one's circle of friends. Speaking to those who have had much more to do with David in his role as Editor-in-Chief of the *BJPsych International*, he is described as conscientious, considerate and caring, and if you add to this (and I would certainly elect to do so) courteous and competent, then you have a 'full house' – a hand that few editors genuinely hold – although many would bluff otherwise. Perhaps the best way of summing up these attributes and the many others that he is in possession of is that David is quintessentially a gentleman. Fortunately for the journal and indeed the College, over the years, he has imbued his role as editor with many of these qualities.

Another reason why the journal has succeeded academically, as exemplified by its CiteScore, is by

attracting contributions to its pages from the four corners of the world. However, possibly David's most winning qualities as an editor are that he is a quiet achiever and that he puts others before him, as evidenced by his self-effacing final editorial, in which he generously highlights the work of others and credits the journal's success to the collective efforts of those around him rather than claiming them as his own. It is this magnanimity that sets him apart, along with his scholarly excellence. I say this with some caution as it is important not to misconstrue the latter as magniloquent aggrandisement. For instance, I doubt both would be aware that David has published both in *Science* and *Nature*, not to mention *The Lancet* and *Nature Genetics*. It is therefore no surprise that his work has accrued nearly 30 000 citations and an H-index that would be the envy of most academics. And yet, a significant part of his mission in the journal has been to encourage research by those new to the art of research and for the journal to capture mental science across cultures to ensure it has a truly international presence.

Although I began this testimonial and expression of gratitude by stating that I do not know David personally, and this is still true, I feel I do know him somewhat by virtue of a shared medical provenance and commonality of training. David graduated in medicine from Manchester University, my *alma mater*, and underwent psychiatric training in London, at the Maudsley Hospital and Institute of Psychiatry – bastions of excellence that I too had the good fortune of experiencing. Thus, at some subliminal level, I feel we have a connection that is further strengthened by being editors of College journals. It is therefore with great admiration that I thank

David for his outstanding service to the global community of the *BJPsych International*.

### Data availability

Data availability is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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### Declaration of interest

G.S.M. is College Editor, Royal College of Psychiatrists, and Editor-in-Chief of the *BJPsych*.

COUNTRY  
PROFILE

# Psychiatry in Qatar

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**The first article written about psychiatric services in Qatar was published in *BJPsych International* in 2006. Since then, the health system in Qatar has undergone significant transformation in the areas of service delivery, research and education. International accreditations are sought in all these fields to emphasise the standard achieved. In this article, we follow up on the mental health services currently available in Qatar, their strengths and the associated challenges.**

Qatar is a small sovereign country in the Middle East, known for its vast reserves of natural gas and oil. Its population of just over 2.9 million people is primarily made up of expatriate workers, with a distinct Qatari identity rooted in the country's unique history and culture, heavily influenced by Islamic teachings. Hospitality and food are important aspects of Qatari culture.<sup>1</sup> This was shared with the world as the country hosted the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Qatar also targets excellence in health, education and research. Several international colleges and universities have opened camps in Qatar, many under the umbrella of the Qatar Foundation for Science and Technology, which has also launched the largest research fund in the region through its National Priorities Research Program. Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) provides the largest public healthcare services, including mental health services.

### Historical background

Psychiatry in Qatar has a relatively short history compared with other medical specialties. Traditional healing practices had a significant role in the past, and modern psychiatric care was introduced only shortly after independence in the early 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Since then, there has been a steady progression of services to meet international standards for mental healthcare delivery. Although traditional healing remains a choice for

many, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of evidence-based approaches to mental health.

The Ministry of Public Health in Qatar has worked closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international advisors to support efforts to uplift the standard of mental health service delivery and training. The first Qatar National Mental Health Strategy (2013–2018) was subsequently launched. This was a 5-year strategy with objectives aligned with the WHO Mental Health Global Action Plan. The strategy later developed into the National Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategic Framework 2019–2022 and the broader Qatar National Health Strategy 2018–2022.<sup>3</sup>

The Qatari government has launched various initiatives, including public education campaigns and training programmes for healthcare professionals. In addition, Qatar has become a hub for mental health research and innovation.

### Service provision

Mental healthcare in Qatar is provided by the mental health services of HMC with minimal privately run clinics. The National Mental Health Strategy called for the more prevalent disorders to be treated at the primary care level, while HMC focused on the less prevalent and more severe disorders. The Primary Health Care Corporation thus provided extensive training for many general practitioners and family physicians in the management of anxiety and depression. Guidelines and referral policies were developed to facilitate incorporating mental health into primary care, albeit with some limitations.

The provision of mental health services therefore remains primarily led by the psychiatry department of HMC. The services are accredited by Joint Commission International as an academic facility. Currently, there are 106 acute in-patient beds; together with 28 residential beds, these represent the only in-patient service for the entire population. Subspecialties have