Highlights of this issue

By Derek K. Tracy

Persona
Outcomes in psychosis are disheartening. We know this as clinicians, and we have all had patients for whom our best efforts appear to be failing. Do we risk projecting such pessimism, and does that matter? Rodrigo Bressan and colleagues (pp. 1–3) say yes it does. They counsel that an attitude lacking in hope impairs mutual faith in treatment and recovery, and hinders the implementation of evidence-based interventions. We are cautioned not to confuse hope with ‘hype’ or optimism, but to view it as the capacity to overcome barriers and choose appropriate clinical courses. Moreover, they propose that there is a science of hope, which appears to be failing. Do we risk projecting such pessimism, and counsel that our interventions are stumped by image problems, or that they are simply simple, with yes/no answers to just two questions: ‘during the past month have you often been feeling down, depressed, or hopeless? ’ ‘during the past month have you often been bothered by having little interest or pleasure in doing things?’

Keeltharuth et al (pp. 42–49) report on a new patient-reported outcome measure (PROM), the ‘ReQoL,’ that focuses on recovery, capturing themes of activity, hope, belonging and relationships, self-perception, well-being, autonomy and physical health. Tested on over 6,500 service users, a shorter- and longer-version both showed good psychometric properties. There are similar health status measures such as the EQ-5D and SWEMWBS, but the ReQoL has the strength of being specifically developed for use in mental health populations. Kaleidoscope (pp. 62–63) looks at data on social inclusion and outcomes in some of society’s most excluded populations, which takes us to an editorial by Jed Boardman (pp. 4–5). He reminds us how PROMs, despite the ‘P’, have not always captured patient priorities, yet the quality of a healthcare system is surely judged by the help it provides to those who need it. Rolling out the ReQoL, or similar tools, at a wider service-level with real-time digitised capture are the next steps in the outcomes world. The debate continues in this month’s Mental Elf blog, with Martyna Sawicka asking how we get to the PROM at: https://elfi.sh/bjp-me11.

The magician
Outcomes in electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) are often excellent. A simple statement that over-glosses a world of controversy in the peer-review literature. Our scientific committee currently being debated, with arguments about our own practices of restraint and seclusion. Finally, from hope through prayer, to the supernatural, Kaleidoscope discusses the science of detecting the paranormal, and why you may at times get that uncomfortable feeling that there is something out there watching you...