



Editorial

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A new era begins

Clinical health promotion to provide evidence for the benefit of patients, professionals and communities.

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It is a great pleasure to launch the new scientific journal; Clinical Health Promotion – Best Research and Practice for patients, staff and community, the official journal for the International Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services (HPH). The HPH Network was initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) 25 years ago, and its development reflects the emphasis that WHO places on evidence-based decision-making in health. If we know what works, then we know what we should be doing.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe has revitalized this in many ways in the last year, including appointing a Chief Scientist, setting up the new European Advisory Committee on Health Research, and underlining specifically a real commitment to and investment in disease prevention and health promotion. So it is hoped that this new journal will significantly improve the way in which evidence-based practice, professional experience and patient preference on clinical health promotion is published worldwide.

The overall aim of the new journal is to support work towards better health gain by integrating health promotion into the organizational structure and culture of hospitals and health services and to support closer links and integration between individual preventative health services and population-based public health services. The goal is to establish a high quality, referenced journal for all health professionals in contact with patients in need of, undergoing or receiving follow-up through health promotion activities in hospi-

tals and health services. The journal will also serve managers, researchers, policy makers, patient organizations and others with an interest in targeting patients, staff, community and the environment in the field of health promotion.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe has launched the development, with Member States, of a new European policy for health and wellbeing, called Health 2020. Health inequalities exist both within and among countries, at significant human and economic cost – and action is needed. Health 2020 will be underpinned by a range of new evidence, including a specially commissioned European study on social determinants of health, whose preliminary report will be published later this year.

Health 2020, which will be presented for endorsement by European Member States in 2012, reflects a renewed commitment to public health – with considerable emphasis on prevention – while at the same time advocating for stronger health systems and the appropriate development of national health policies and strategies. It supports action to strengthen public health capacities and services at all levels of health systems, and across sectors, with the objective of scaling up prevention of diseases, health promotion and improvement. It is hoped therefore that this journal will be important in ensuring an evidence-based approach to implementing the key principles of Health 2020. Communication of all kinds will be key in gaining the involvement of all in formulating and implementing this policy from patients to professional health

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workers to decision makers, with the expert patient playing an especially crucial role.

All health care services providers, both at primary, secondary and tertiary level of care, have a crucial role to play in improving health, and the WHO Regional Office for Europe considers the International Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services an important partner for implementing Health 2020. HPH and WHO have therefore recently signed a memorandum of understanding for improved collaboration in order to increase preventive services to the citizens and to improve their health and quality of life. Noncommunicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and mental disorders account for about 86% of the Region's deaths, and 77% of the disease burden; yet within Europe, investment in non-communicable disease prevention and mental health remain very low. You may ask why hospitals and health services should be involved with health promotion – and the simple answer is that patients benefit significantly. Health promotion may be an integrated part of their clinical pathway, such as smoking cessation intervention in relation to surgery, or in the longer term, keeping them healthier for a longer time.

Health professionals have a responsibility to provide the best evidence-based practice for their patients and this includes health promotion activities. They usually collect new knowledge from scientific journals and apply this when implementing. Scientific journals are well-accepted ways to disseminate new evidence and best practice. This new scientific journal will aim to meet the needs in this field. Although many fine health journals exist, no other scientific journal has its main focus on clinical health promotion. This is a growing clinical area with a huge need for fast publication of good research that is currently being rejected. This is a problem, not only for the International HPH Network, but also for other networks and research groups within this field.

Scientific publication of high quality research is important documentation that will stay visible and be useful in the work with reaching better health gain. We hope that all clinicians, researchers and other health professionals will read and support this journal, and that it will become a significant international scientific journal. Thus, by implementing the best evidence-based health promotion practices in hospitals and other health care facilities, they will contribute to the regional and global effort to fight preventable noncommunicable diseases and to improve the health and quality of life of citizens throughout Europe.

Clinical Health Promotion is an open access journal and all issues can be downloaded free of charge at www.clinhp.org