Editorial

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Abstract

Mental health and mental disorders pose a tremendous challenge to the societal, health, and research policies in Europe, and sound advice is needed on a potential strategy for mental health research investment. Toward this goal, the ROAMER initiative (“Roadmap for Mental Health Research in Europe”) was launched to map the current state of the art, to identify gaps and to delineate advances needed in various areas and domains of mental health research in Europe. To further stimulate discussions among the scientific community and stakeholders on how to improve mental health research and to promote an improved research agenda for the next decade, this IJMPR topic issue presents the overall ROAMER methodology as well as a series of selected papers highlighting critical issues of psychological approaches and interventions as outcomes of the ROAMER work package 5 “Psychological research and treatments”. Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

The challenges posed by mental health and mental disorders in the European Union (EU) have become increasingly clear over the decades and have constituted a major component of policies on all levels in Europe. This is for example reflected in “Horizon 2020”, the framework programme for research and innovation of the European Commission (2014–2020) in its chapter “Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing” (European Commission, 2013), as well as in a wide range of respective research strategy actions by national funding agencies. But what is needed is clear advice on a potential strategy for mental health research investment. Towards this goal the EU has launched, supported and funded a major initiative called “Roadmap for Mental Health Research in Europe” (ROAMER). This project has the task to provide much needed critical appraisals of various areas and domains in order to create an integrated and participatory roadmap for mental health research in Europe.

This topic issue of *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* (IJMPR) presents a collection of selected papers from this initiative focusing on the overall ROAMER

methodology as well as a series of papers highlighting selectively critical issues of psychological approaches and interventions as outcome of the work package 5 “Psychological research and treatments” (Wittchen *et al.*, 2014). It should be mentioned that this supplement only presents a small part of the ROAMER output. In depth presentations of other work packages can be found in additional publications of other peer review journals, such as for work package 4 “Biomedical Research” in *European Neuropsychopharmacology* (Schumann *et al.*, 2013).

This IJMPR topic issue is opened by Haro *et al.* providing a comprehensive description of the ROAMER methods, procedures and processes. The ROAMER programme is structured in numerous work packages, namely:

- Structuring of research capacity, infrastructures, capacity building and funding strategies
- Biomedical research
- Psychological research and treatments
- Social and economic aspects

- Public health research
- Well-being
- Analysis of geographic, clinical, multi-disciplinary and life course integration
- Stakeholder involvement
- Promotion and dissemination
- Translation into roadmaps.

The ROAMER initiative is completely aligned with the Horizon 2020 programme and its three pillars of excellence: science; industrial leadership; competitiveness; and responding to societal challenges (cf. Proposal for a Council Decision. Establishing the Specific Programme Implementing Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, 2014–2020). It is highly participatory with involvement of all key stakeholders (patients, industry, funding organization and policy-makers) to ensure

that the questions that arise are socially relevant as well as scientifically excellent. The ROAMER process also takes into account how the European context actually benefits the science. A fuller description of the methods and procedures used in ROAMER as well as documents summarizing the gaps and advances of the ROAMER consortium can be found at <http://www.roamer-mh.org>.

By providing this series of papers to the wider scientific community and stakeholders we hope to stimulate a broader discussion of how to improve mental health research in the next decade and to promote an improved research agenda.

Declaration of interest statement

The author has no competing interests.

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