

PUBLISHING ADDICTION SCIENCE

A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

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FOREWORD

The objective of the World Health Organization (WHO) as enshrined in its constitution is the 'attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.' In order to achieve this objective, the constitution lists many functions, among which are the promotion of research in the field of health and cooperation among scientific and professional groups. *Publishing Addiction Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* is a timely product developed to serve as a tool for the promotion of research on alcohol and other psychoactive substances and effective dissemination of research findings through scientific publications.

This book was initiated by the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors. ISAJE was founded 'to promote excellence in the communication and dissemination of information on addiction and related sciences within the scientific community and to those who have responsibility for the prevention, treatment, cure, professional training and policy formation in the field.' Because this objective coincides with the knowledge functions of WHO in the area of substance abuse, collaborating with ISAJE on this publication was logical to the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

Psychoactive substance use and dependence are serious and growing problems all over the world. Recent data from WHO show that substance use problems account for a significantly high proportion of the burden of disease worldwide. According to the World Health Report 2002, for example, alcohol and tobacco were responsible for 4.0% and 4.1%, respectively, of the global burden in 2000 measured in terms of disability-adjusted life years. In many parts of the world injecting drug use contributes significantly to new HIV cases and the transmission of other blood-borne infections. Of particular relevance to this publication is the growing prevalence of alcohol and other substance use disorders in low and middle income countries. These are countries where the tradition of research often needs developing and where a book of this nature will be very useful especially to young health researchers.

Publishing Addiction Science: A Guide For The Perplexed is a natural follow-up to a recent initiative of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse. In November 2003, the department held a meeting with 25 editors on the role of scientific journals in galvanizing research on mental health in low and middle income countries. A joint statement was issued by participating journal editors and the department on how to build local capacity for the collection, analysis and publication of data on mental health and related problems in these countries. This book follows some of the recommendations in this statement and can serve as a vehicle for training and other types of support for researchers in countries where such help is highly needed.

Helping to build local capacity for research in the field of substance abuse and wide dissemination of knowledge by researchers in low and middle income countries are important planks for the achievement of WHO's objective of reducing the health burden associated with psychoactive substance use. The publication of this book will go a long way in contributing to the achievement of this objective.

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