

# The *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* and the College of Psychiatry of Ireland

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In 2012, the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* became the official research journal of the College of Psychiatry of Ireland. The coming together of the *Journal* and the College marks an important moment in the histories of both, and a significant stage in the evolution of Irish psychiatry.

## Founding editor of the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*: Dr Mark Hartman

The *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* was founded in 1982 by Dr Mark Hartman (1942-1994). Mark Hartman was born in Chicago in 1942, the son of an eminent forensic psychologist. After high school, Mark completed a BSc in mathematics and physics, and came to Ireland in the early 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Mark studied medicine in Trinity College Dublin, where he qualified in 1969, following a brilliant undergraduate career which saw him elected a scholar of the university. Mark studied psychiatry under Professor Peter Beckett (1922-1974), first professor of psychiatry at Trinity,<sup>2</sup> who described Mark as "the best student in his class".<sup>3</sup> Dr Hartman received his American MD in 1969.

Dr Hartman served his internship in Sir Patrick Duns Hospital and then worked in St. Patrick's Hospital, St. Ita's, St. Brendan's and St. Vincent's, Fairview. He was elected a Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1973 and worked in St. Mary's, Castlebar until permanently appointed at St. Brendan's in 1978. In 1983, Dr Hartman took a three-year career break to the United States, where he was associate professor of psychiatry in Boston University and medical director of Lakeshore Hospital, Manchester, New Hampshire.<sup>1</sup>

Also in 1983, Dr Hartman attained his American Board Examinations in Psychiatry and Neurology in Boston, and was ranked in the top 2% of all candidates who had previously sat the examination. Following his career break in the United States, Dr Hartman returned to Dublin and worked at Vergemount Psychiatric Clinic. He died in 1994, following a year-long illness. Dr Hartman was posthumously elected to Fellowship of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Throughout his career, Dr Hartman demonstrated an enormous depth of knowledge and passion for psychiatry. He had a particular interest in psychoanalytical psychotherapy, a field which informed

his approach to both psychiatric education and clinical care.<sup>1,4</sup> Dr Hartman was deeply involved in psychiatric training: he was appointed clinical tutor in St. Brendan's in 1973, taught at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and was specialty tutor for the Eastern Region Postgraduate Training Programme from 1979 to 1994.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to his interests in psychiatry and psychotherapy, Dr Hartman had interests in myriad other fields. He had a particular love of Middle English and held a Masters Degree in English from Trinity College, Dublin. He was an gifted musician and accomplished pianist, and owned one of the first mobile phones in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of all of these activities and accomplishments, Dr Hartman founded the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*, in 1982.<sup>1</sup> At first, it was an uphill battle to attract submissions, re-write certain papers, edit the *Journal* and organise publication. Dr Hartman performed all of these tasks with insight and enthusiasm, at all hours of day and night. He brought enormous vision and drive to the undertaking, travelling to Northern Ireland and England to seek out submissions, and inviting international speakers to Ireland in order to obtain more papers.

In order to produce the *Journal* itself, Dr Hartman designed original computer software and programmes, and was determined from the outset that the *Journal* would embrace new technologies such as the Internet, even though the Internet was in its early infancy in Ireland when the *Journal* was founded in 1982. Following its foundation, Dr Hartman oversaw the establishment of a circulation base for the *Journal*, a remarkable growth in circulation (in terms of both numbers and geography), broad-based scientific indexing, and the stocking of the *Journal* in libraries around the world. This series of accomplishments built the *Journal* into a remarkably strong scientific and clinical voice, with impact and reach well beyond these shores.

Dr Hartman's dedication to the *Journal* was as profound as it was pragmatic and, thanks to his unstinting work, Dr Hartman saw the *Journal's* "reputation grow steadily as a quarterly specialist publication, essential to its Irish base and attracting international readers and authors".<sup>2</sup> From the outset, the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* was a truly extraordinary creation, created by a truly extraordinary man.

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## The *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*: 1994-2012

In 1994, following the untimely death of Dr Hartman, Professor Brian Lawlor became editor-in-chief of the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*. On appointment, Professor Lawlor explicitly renewed the *Journal's* commitment to its central objectives: disseminating the results of original scientific research to a national and international readership; expressing the unique identity of Irish psychiatry; and underscoring the importance of cross-cultural differences in psychiatry within and beyond these islands.<sup>5</sup>

Over the following years, the *Journal* continued to publish national and international research papers, as well as editorials, review papers, case-reports and book reviews. Format was substantially revised in conjunction with the *Journal's* long-time publisher, MedMedia. As psychiatry in Ireland evolved over this period,<sup>6</sup> the *Journal* appointed a trainee editor in 2004,<sup>7</sup> a deputy editor in 2008, a new editor-in-chief in 2010, and a consulting editor in 2011.

In 2009, the *Journal* published the first in a series of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules, to assist with learning and self-assessment for psychiatrists.<sup>8</sup> A broad range of topics has been covered since then, including management of schizophrenia,<sup>9</sup> alcohol use disorders,<sup>10</sup> adherence,<sup>11</sup> morbid jealousy,<sup>12</sup> post-traumatic stress disorder,<sup>13</sup> fetal alcohol spectrum disorders,<sup>14</sup> tobacco smoking and mental illness,<sup>15</sup> serotonin toxicity,<sup>16</sup> improving monitoring for metabolic syndrome using audit<sup>17</sup> and antidepressant augmentation and combination in bipolar depression.<sup>18</sup>

For over two decades, the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* has awarded the John Dunne Medal, established in honour of Professor John Dunne, president of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association in 1955 and first professor of psychiatry in Ireland.<sup>19,20</sup> Dr Mark Hartman, founding editor of the *Journal*, was a strong admirer of Professor Dunne. Consistent with the emphasis that Professor Dunne placed on scientific research into mental illness,<sup>21</sup> the John Dunne Medal is awarded annually to a trainee from Ireland or the United Kingdom. To be eligible, a trainee must have made a significant contribution (though not necessarily as first author) to an original paper published by the *Journal* over the previous year. Over the past two decades the John Dunne Medal has come to symbolise excellence and originality in the field of psychiatric research.<sup>22</sup>

## The College of Psychiatry of Ireland

The College of Psychiatry of Ireland is the professional body for psychiatrists in Ireland and the sole body recognised by the Medical Council and Health Service Executive (public health care provider in Ireland) for competence assurance and training in psychiatry. The College offers membership, for psychiatrists and trainees, of an Irish institution which aims to be the voice of psychiatry in Ireland ([www.irishpsychiatry.ie](http://www.irishpsychiatry.ie)).

The College emerged as an organisation in 2009 when three former bodies merged: the Irish College of Psychiatrists (a division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in the United Kingdom), the Irish Psychiatric Association, and the then training body for psychiatry, the Irish Psychiatric Training Committee. It had been apparent for many years that both the law and mental health services in the United Kingdom served different needs to those in Ireland and therefore an Irish organisation was seen by many as being long overdue.

The College of Psychiatry of Ireland aims to address not only issues relevant to its Irish members but also issues for psychiatry in general, for mental health services, and ultimately for services-users. It aims to promote good mental health and high quality mental health care for all involved in mental health services. The College fully supports Ireland's national mental health policy, "A Vision for Change"<sup>23</sup> and has consistently urged that this policy be implemented in full, in order to give Ireland the mental health service it deserves.

In conjunction with its representative, training and advocacy roles, the College has a growing role in promoting and encouraging research, with a view to generating an improved evidence-base for psychiatric practice. In this respect, the College is assuming at least some of the roles envisioned in long-standing calls for a research-oriented Irish Institute of Psychiatry, which has not yet materialized in Ireland.<sup>24,25</sup>

Following the emergence of the College in 2009, it was readily apparent that the College would need a journal in order to strengthen the College's participation in the international research community and assist the College in shaping and improving standards of mental health care. Given its unique role in expressing the "identity of Irish psychiatry",<sup>5</sup> long history of high-quality publishing, and growing international profile, the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* was the obvious candidate for this role.

In 2012, the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* duly became the official research journal of the College of Psychiatry of Ireland.

## Times of change in Irish psychiatry and medical publishing

These are challenging and exciting times for mental health care in Ireland, and beyond. In Ireland, the practice and profession of psychiatry are being gradually but definitely transformed with the implementation of the Mental Health Act 2001 (2001-2006), introduction of "A Vision for Change" (2006),<sup>23</sup> establishment of the College of Psychiatry of Ireland (2009), development of new systems for competence assurance by the Medical Council and College of Psychiatry of Ireland (2011), and review of the Mental Health Act 2001 (2012).

Looking more broadly, the ongoing expansion of the scientific evidence-base for psychiatric practice is also transforming mental health care; service user movements are helping shape better systems of care; and public services in general are seeking to become more efficient, responsive and user-focussed. Against the backdrop of the economic and social challenges facing Ireland and Europe at present,<sup>26</sup> these developments present unique challenges and opportunities to mental health service users and providers alike.

In this medical, scientific and social context, medical journals play a vital role in the generation and dissemination of knowledge, and in shaping change.<sup>27</sup> Medical journals have particular importance in informing evidence-based practice, developing health policy, and underpinning training programmes and continuing education for practitioners. Medical journals can also open up new areas of research, prompt critical and constructive debate, and generate interest in hitherto neglected areas of thought and practice. The *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* has a long history of filling many of these roles.

These are, however, also times of transformation for medical journals themselves. Key changes relate to the evolution of electronic communication technologies, issues related to independent scientific peer review, and substantial changes in the broader publishing industry.<sup>28,29</sup> Further issues relate to the complex roles of journals in the developing world<sup>30</sup> and in the protection of human rights.<sup>31</sup> Issues of human rights are especially important in the context of mental health policy<sup>32</sup> and mental health law,<sup>33-35</sup> especially following recent changes in legislation, as is the case in Ireland.<sup>36-39</sup>

Notwithstanding these challenges – or, more likely, because of them – medical journals are set to retain a critical role in shaping medical knowledge, informing evidence-based practice, developing health policy and underpinning training in health-care disciplines.<sup>27</sup> While the format and structure of journals may change dramatically, the necessity for them will not.

### The Journal and the College: Looking to the future

As research journal of the College of Psychiatry of Ireland, the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* will continue to publish high quality original research from around the world. These original data papers will continue to form the central focus of the *Journal*, supplemented by briefer reports of smaller research projects, audit cycles, and various other kinds of papers which reflect different approaches to research, practice and education in mental health care.

The *Journal* has a long-standing commitment to publishing case-reports, which we believe serve several important purposes, including the description of new conditions or novel effects of treatments; suggesting new indications for existing treatments;<sup>40</sup> quality assurance; and education.<sup>41</sup> In addition, case-reports are often especially engaging for readers, many of whom find clinical vignettes involving, informative and pragmatic.<sup>42</sup> Like the *Lancet*, the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* still sees an important role for relevant, well-written case-reports.<sup>43</sup>

The *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* also remains committed to publishing papers presented in a range of different formats, including editorials, review papers, educational papers, letters to the editor, and book reviews. The *Journal* is similarly committed to publishing historical papers examining key topics in the histories of psychiatry in Ireland and elsewhere.<sup>44-46</sup> In this issue, we are especially pleased to publish an historical paper looking at admission rates for schizophrenia and other disorders during Ireland's Great Famine (1845-1849),<sup>47</sup> an event which was curiously absent from the historiography of Irish psychiatry to date.<sup>19,48</sup>

The *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* has a strong tradition of highlighting and debating key issues in contemporary psychiatry, and this, too, will continue. In recent years, we have published occasional multi-author papers examining key issues,<sup>49,50</sup> and our regular editorials have explored diverse topics including deinstitutionalisation in disability services,<sup>51</sup> dementia care,<sup>52</sup> mental health and the asylum process,<sup>53</sup> psychiatric training and research,<sup>54</sup> reflective practice in psychiatric training,<sup>55</sup> primary care mental health<sup>56</sup> and perinatal psychiatry.<sup>57</sup>

In March 2011, we published a special supplement dedicated to head shop drugs,<sup>58,59</sup> looking in detail at the clinical effects of

mephedrone and other head shop drugs,<sup>60,61</sup> users' experiences of cathinones,<sup>62</sup> "whack" induced psychosis,<sup>63</sup> and benzylpiperazine-induced acute delirium.<sup>64</sup> In future years, we will continue to highlight key issues in psychiatry, policy, training and research throughout the *Journal*.

In addition to these thematic and editorial priorities, we will continue to seek to expand the *Journal's* indexing profile. From the outset, the *Journal's* founding editor, Dr Mark Hartman, ensured broad-based indexing for the *Journal*. At present, the *Journal* is indexed in Biological Abstracts (BIOSIS Previews); Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique/Inist; Pascal; Excerpta Medica/Embase; Institute for Scientific Information; Current Contents/Social and Behavioural Sciences (Social Science Citation Index, Research Alert); Psychological Abstracts (PsycInfo/PsycLit); Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature; Current Aids Literature (CAB Abstracts); International Pharmaceutical Abstracts; Linguistics and Language Behaviour Abstracts; Nutrition Abstracts and Reviews (CAB Abstracts); Referativnyi Zhurnal; Social Planning/Policy and Development Abstracts; Social Work Research and Abstracts; and Sociological Abstracts.

In coming years, we will seek actively to expand our indexing profile so as to better reflect the quality and diversity of original research published in the *Journal* and optimise *Journal* impact.

### The voice of psychiatry in Ireland

From the very beginning, the founding editor of the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*, Dr Mark Hartman, saw the *Journal* becoming the voice of a national college of psychiatry in Ireland. Over subsequent decades, the *Journal* duly assumed a key role "in expressing the unique identity of Irish psychiatry", and the "complex tapestry of different historical traditions and experiences that mesh together to create a system that is unique and different from any of its derivative parts".<sup>5</sup> The coming together of the *Journal* with the College of Psychiatry of Ireland in 2012 represents the realisation of Dr Hartman's vision, and a logical and important step in the evolution of psychiatry in Ireland.

As research journal of the College of Psychiatry of Ireland, the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* will continue to fulfil its established roles in advancing the evidence-base for practice and "expressing the unique identity of Irish psychiatry",<sup>5</sup> but will also seek to expand and develop in new directions. As part of that process, readers who wish to make suggestions about how the *Journal* can develop in the future should feel free to submit their ideas to the editorial team (sfarrell@irishpsychiatry.ie). All suggestions are welcome.

Like the College of Psychiatry of Ireland, the *Journal's* key aims are to inform and improve mental health services in Ireland and beyond, and, ultimately, enhance the quality of mental health care provided to those who need it.

In the end, that's what matters most.

### Conflict of interest

The author is editor-in-chief of the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*.

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