Editorial: Women and the Pandemic

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2021 has again been a challenging year for all of us. The coronavirus still takes our breath, not only that of the infected, but also that of many others—in the physiological and psychological sense. Many of us in the health services are still struggling against the virus, against the stupidity of corona and vaccination deniers, against endless hours of overtime and exhaustion. Some of us also struggle for evidence-based political decisions and suffer from disappointment and fatigue.

Stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms have increased in our societies, especially in the vulnerable groups including people with pre-existing mental problems, those young, lonely, living alone, or those working in affected businesses and with financial problems, and—above all—healthcare workers, especially those in intensive care or in contact with (potential) Covid-19 patients.

And we should realize that it is mainly women, who have suffered and are suffering from this pandemic.

Thus, the pandemic seems to increase many gender inequalities. Very often one can see a backlash to the classical gender role distribution with women in home office not only performing their office duties, but also caring for the children and their home schooling, the household, and the ill or elderly family members and neighbours. Being locked at home, many women were suffering from increased partner violence with reduced possibilities to find help as the services and houses for battered women were often closed. Pregnant women in many places at times got only reduced appointments with their gynaecologists, birth preparation classes were cancelled, and fathers often were not allowed to attend delivery or the neonatal care unit. Mother-baby-units for mentally ill mothers were closed in many places.

Also as professionals, women are usually the main caretakers for those affected, e.g., as nurses in hospitals or homes for the elderly. They disproportionately more often work as

teachers or in the service sector with increased stress and risk of infection, feeling anxious not only for themselves, but also for their families. And let us not forget that many women worldwide with informal work and volunteers, who do not get any compensation and therefore often need to work under dangerous conditions.

As I already stressed last year, some of us have shown enormous strength. And my great wish for the coming year is that you can keep that up!

Archives of Women's Mental Health (AWMH) has continued to help researchers publishing Covid-19-related results as quickly as possible without compromising quality. This has again been a major team effort. I would like to sincerely thank the Section Editors, the members of our Editorial Board and all authors and reviewers for their enormous work during this unprecedented time. And I would also like to thank you all for your ongoing support for the journal. My special thanks also go to Ms. Ho and Ms. Amayna from Springer, our publisher. The journal again had a very successful year, and this would not have been possible without you! The 2-year impact factor of the journal has increased from 2.50 to 3.63, the 5-year impact factor from 3.23 to 4.55 (published in 2021 for the year 2020). In the first 11 months of 2021, time from submission to first decision was 30 days. We published 109 articles with a total of 1057 pages in print, and 96 online first, with over 400,000 downloads in 2021.

New editorial board members with special expertise were appointed: Dr. Veena Satyanarayana—Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar—Dr. Judith Morgan—Dr. Crystal Clark—Prof. Dawn Edge—Prof. Soraya Seedat—Dr. Ripal Shah. They at the same time increase the diversity of our board. The AWMH continues to be the official journal of the IAWMH—International Association for Women's Mental Health, the Marcé Society—International Society for Psychiatric Disorders in Childbearing, and the NASPOG—North American Society for Psychosocial Obstetrics and Gynecology.

AWMH would like to reflect the whole field of women's mental health. We therefore welcome articles on sex and gender differences in mental disorders and associated risk factors. So please submit respective studies from the fields

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of epidemiology, basic research, stress research, psychoendocrinology, neuroimaging, neuropsychology, sociology, etc. Most welcome are also interdisciplinary studies, focusing on the interface between psychiatry/psychology and gynaecology/obstetrics. We are also interested in training and education in women's mental health, in mentoring for female mental health professionals, and in policies for the prevention of mental illness in women. Please submit original articles as well as systematic reviews and meta-analyses on these topics, if they are of interest for an international readership. We also continue to publish topical collections. On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the International Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health, Lisa Segre, their President and one of our section editors, published a collection on "[Innovations in Research, Policy and Clinical Care](#)". In the process of preparation is a collection on "Fathers as Assets to Support Maternal Mental Health and Family Well-being" by Sheehan D. Fisher. You are most welcome to suggest further collections.

I very much hope that with this journal we can contribute to a better understanding of women's mental health from an interdisciplinary point of view. Please help by increasing the

visibility of AWMH by introducing it to your colleagues or citing our articles. Please also visit the journal on our website <https://www.springer.com/journal/737>—there you can see all online first publications and also the quarterly editor's pick. You can also visit us on Twitter https://twitter.com/AWMH_Journal—please tweet about interesting articles or share on other social media. Let us all contribute to improving the mental health of women around the globe.

Again, I want to thank you all and ask you to send me your ideas, wishes, and comments. I look forward to further successful cooperation and wish you all a creative, productive, and happy 2022.

Stay healthy and keep going—for the sake of our patients and our families.

Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Dr. med. Anita Riecher Rössler.

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