

Editorial



Crisis – The Road Ahead

Diego De Leo

After serving for several years as Associate Editor of *Crisis*, I am honored that I have now been called upon to do the “main job.” Starting with this issue, I will act as first Editor-in-Chief of *Crisis*, taking over from Annette Beautrais (who will sit beside me as second Editor-in-Chief) and from John Connolly, who will continue to serve the journal as member of the Editorial Board. I believe we are all indebted to Annette and John for their excellent work. If *Crisis* today has an impact factor of 1.31 (the same as *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, by the way), a large portion of the credit goes to them and their dedication.

I am most honored to be taking up this job, and I promise authors and readers to do my best in further improving the journal. I have no Copernican revolution in mind, just the promise of strong commitment and a few hopes.

First, I feel committed to maintaining the multidisciplinary character of *Crisis*, which will continue to reflect the nature of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and its multiethnic and multicultural membership. In addition, I would love *Crisis* to attract contributors and readers from disciplines and domains traditionally a bit more “external” to suicidological debates, such as education, anthropology, history, health economics, mathematics, and research methodology. More contributors from the areas of ethics and sociology would also enrich us all. A great deal of research has been dedicated to suicide and its prevention in the past two decades; it is my conviction that to bring suicide research to the next stage, we need to operate by using different competencies and profiting from a diversity of disciplines. This will widen our perspective and improve our understanding.

Needless to say, my editorial colleagues and I will also continue to try and increase the scientific profile of *Crisis* by publishing contributions on the highest scientific standard. We are all now actors on a global stage, and impact factors and citation indices are necessary features of every author’s publication profile, with which he or she “competes” for funding. A journal, too, has constantly to strive

for improvement in order to remain “competitive.” However, it is with some hesitation that I use the adjective “competitive” in this context, since our main mission is to advance suicide prevention – not to prevail over other journals. At the time of writing this Editorial, *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* is also looking to appoint a new Editor-in-Chief, while Barbara Stanley has been looking after *Archives for Suicide Research* for around 2 years now. In many ways it might be ideal if the three main journals in the area of suicide could each identify their own specialties and develop them, in some sort of loose agreement with each other. I do not agree with those colleagues that maintain that there are too many organizations and too many journals in the field of suicide. To judge from the number of submissions *Crisis* received between August 1 (the time when I actually started handling new submissions) and the end of September ($n = 31!$), I have to conclude that there might even be room for a fourth journal. As a passionate supporter of suicide prevention, I can only be happy that many people (scholars, clinicians, volunteers, and young scientists in particular) are now dealing with suicide research and prevention programs. It seems to me worth remembering that when the International Academy for Suicide Research was founded, the basic idea inspiring its foundation was the need to stimulate research activities, since IASP was at the time felt to be lacking in that regard. I must say that the stimulus of new “competition” turned out to be a real blessing for IASP, because the association’s congresses rapidly became the natural home for the best research from around the world. I believe we can all be proud of what IASP is today – and its potential has yet to be fully expressed, when we consider activities like the World Suicide Prevention Day and its impact in more than 70 countries around the globe. We can, and I am sure will, do much more than this . . .

As far as *Crisis* itself is concerned, I am delighted to announce that a new online electronic manuscript submission and peer-review system for *Crisis* is scheduled to go

live on November 4, 2008 (my thanks here go to Annette Beautrais, for starting the process of getting the system set up). I am particularly pleased with the system chosen by Hogrefe, our publishers. In fact, I believe the Editorial Manager system (produced by Aries Systems Corporation, Boston, MA) is among the best around: It is simple, quick, and effective, and makes progress through the review process clear and transparent to authors, reviewers, and editors alike. The system is now in use by more than 2,900 journals worldwide. So, from now on all contributors and reviewers are requested to submit their work through the *Crisis* submission and review portal, which can be reached through the journal's website at www.hogrefe.com/journals/crisis.

Other changes we are introducing for *Crisis* concern the abstracts, which, starting next year, will be structured with sections on Background, Aims, Methods, Results, and Conclusions. A declaration about possible conflicts of interest will be required for each submission. Biographies at the end of the articles will continue to be a feature of *Crisis*, but will be limited to 50 words. In addition, we will publish dates of receipt, revision, and final acceptance. Full instructions for authors can be found on the journal's website.

I am also very happy to report that Dr. Stefano Occhipinti, an experienced biostatistician and an esteemed colleague here at Griffith University, has agreed to serve as Statistical Advisor on manuscripts. This is particularly important, because if it can sometimes be difficult to find good and timely reviewers, it is even more difficult to obtain competent opinions on statistical issues.

There is of course more to come, and I intend to keep readers and authors apprised of developments by means of regular editorials in *Crisis*.

Finally, I would also very much welcome comments and suggestions from authors and readers, both about how *Crisis* should continue to develop to meet the changing needs of readers – whether scientists or “front-line” practitioners – and authors, and of course also about the topics, issues and research that are reported within its pages.

About the author

Diego De Leo, MD, PhD, DSc, FRANZCP, is Professor of Psychiatry at Griffith University, Australia, where he is Director of the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention and of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention.

Diego De Leo

Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention
Mt. Gravatt Campus, Griffith University
176 Messines Ridge Rd
Mt. Gravatt
Queensland 4122, Australia
Tel. +61 7 3735-3382
Fax +61 7 3735-3450
E-mail d.deleo@griffith.edu.au