ARTS LITERATURE AND NATURE (ALAN)

Introduction

In this issue, the JCACAP team bids farewell to the Arts Literature and Nature (ALAN) column in its current form as we expand the scope of offerings in future editions to encompass community-oriented topics and perspectives. Meanwhile, within this issue, John McLennan recommends “Tutto chiede salvezza (Everything Calls for Salvation),” a Netflix miniseries that addresses mental health topics from the unique perspective of an inpatient. Lind Grant-Oyeye explores advocacy in her review of “Supporting Young Children of Immigrants in PreK-3: Occasional Paper Series 39,” a paper series focusing on advocacy that examines the concept as a systemic exercise. Lastly, we introduce the new Community, Perspectives, and Recommendations (CoPaR) column, offering readers an initial glimpse into its planned content and an invitation to submit.

Lind Grant-Oyeye
Humanities Editor

Tutto chiede salvezza (Everything calls for salvation)

Recommended by John McLennan

Tutto chiede salvezza is both a Netflix miniseries and a book about a young person’s one week admission to a psychiatric ward.

The Netflix trailer was not compelling, nor helped by the English dubbing, so I passed over this series for several weeks. One night, however, needing a Netflix fix, and finding nothing else of interest, I decided to give it a go, of course after setting it to Italian audio (with English subtitles).

I became quickly engaged and soon binged the whole season.

The main character, a young adult named Daniele (played by Federico Cesari), is committed to a psychiatric unit for seven days of observation after a violent outburst. Most scenes are set in the inpatient unit, predominately in the one hospital room that Daniele shares with five other mental health patients. The story is an adaptation of the book of the same title written by Daniele Mencarelli and is reported to have autobiographical parts.

Most episodes, built around individual days of the hospital commitment, capture many curious, moving, and disturbing patient-patient, patient-family, and patient-staff interactions.

Not wanting to give more away, I will just conclude that I found it to be a different portrayal of a hospital setting with interesting reflections on mental health problems that I have not quite seen in North American shows. To what degree it might be an “Italian perspective” or something unique to the book’s author or movie director, I cannot say, but I would highly recommend you give it a go. But make sure you set it to the Italian audio to enrich the experience.

Dr. John D. McLennan is a child psychiatrist based in Calgary.

“Supporting Young Children of Immigrants in PreK-3: Occasional Paper Series 39” for further reading on advocacy.

Recommended by Lind Grant-Oyeye

A recent interview with Dr. Raj Rasasingham, the Vice President of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists, undertaken for the JCACAP Apercevoir column has inspired me to revisit advocacy and search for reading material on the subject. Additionally, the revised ALAN column is expanding to feature community-focused topics, including advocacy, one of the pillars of the Royal College of Physicians CANMED competency framework [1].

According to the Mind group [2], advocates support others to help them express their views and wishes, thereby ensuring respect for the rights of the individual or group for whom one advocates. As a domain, over time, there have been different perspectives on advocacy, with different authors focusing on systems versus individualistic paradigms.
The systemic approach underpins the paper series “Supporting Young Children of Immigrants in PreK-3: Occasional Paper Series 39,” which discusses advocacy and its practical application [3]. This collection of articles attempts to answer the question: What is the best way to enhance the voices of others? In answering this question, the series contains multiple sections from various contributors.

In addressing the advocacy needs of young immigrant children, the authors emphasize the importance of focusing on the children’s and community’s capabilities rather than perceived deficits. In the context of the population under review, the article proposes structural changes in early education to promote equity. Furthermore, the authors prefer advocacy undertaken through actively paying careful attention to issues such as funding, immigration law, and reexamining public messaging around immigrants, which promote negative stereotypes and prejudice. They encourage programs that begin with the acknowledgment of the expertise and experience of subjects of the advocacy, highlighting the benefits of strength-based approaches. It is vital to acknowledge the knowledge and respect the cultural practices of the groups or individuals for whom one advocates. The series also highlights how individuals who share similar life experiences to the subjects of advocacy play a significant role in shaping and acknowledging the positive aspects of their distinct culture. The approach presented in the series aligns with Knitzer’s stance on the advantages of employing a systemic approach to advocacy. This approach emphasizes the importance of analyzing structures and frameworks to amplify the voices of marginalized groups. Furthermore, the series highlights the importance of encouraging collaboration among professionals, community organizations, and families to ensure effective advocacy [4]. Additionally, the article points out that early childhood education should not be deployed as a tool for assimilation or reinforcing the status quo but rather to nurture equitable educational conditions for all children. It criticizes anti-immigration attitudes and calls for accountability from institutions, further buttressing the systemic approach to advocacy.

The collection acknowledges the role of systems in maintaining inequity, thereby emphasizing the need for advocacy viewed with a systemic lens, envisioning systems that advance equity, cultural understanding, and strength-based approaches in advocacy.

Overall, this series serves as a great overview of effective advocacy using a practical example. Although focused on the experience of immigrant children, it is my opinion that this collection provides a great framework for advocacy work in other areas related to child and adolescent psychiatry practice.

References

Author guidelines for Community, Perspectives and Recommendations (CoPaR)

Readers are encouraged to submit short reviews or reflections on mental health ideas and their portrayal to the newly named column “Community, Perspectives and Recommendations” (CoPaR) in the Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. Examples of interest include reviews of books and movies that capture aspects of mental health. Other inspirations may include other types of art, or aspects of nature or technology, that have some mental health link.

In addition, this column has now expanded to include ideas about advocacy, as well as a space to capture different perspectives and voices from diverse communities to enrich the breadth and depth of considerations of psychiatric experiences.

A note of caution is that we ask that reflections not endorse the use of any specific non-evidence-based interventions. Submissions can be up to 500 words and can include figures or photos. Submissions should be emailed directly to our Editorial Assistant, Vicki Simmons at vsimmons@shaw.ca (i.e., not through ScholarOne). Include in the email subject line “CoPaR submission”. A subcommittee of the Journal will review all contributions.