EDITORIAL

TUULA KIESEPPÄ

Psychiatria Fennica 2026 goes back to the very basics of psychiatry. Our theme of the year is psychoses, and I am happy to present the volume with around half of the articles dealing with vivid ongoing psychosis research in Finland. The interest in psychoses was one of the leading causes for me to orientate to medicine. At that time, just after leaving school and planning my future, I had a great interest in the human mind, and my strong motivation to study medicine was to learn more about mental disorders. I found psychotic experience a fascinating although bewildering deviation from so-called normality, which, in my opinion, could offer a very special and deep view in what humanity is about. Here I refer to humanity as the human mind covering affect, intelligence, capability of language and self-reflection.

During my Ph.D. studies I came across papers by the psychiatrist and researcher Tim Crow (1,2), who passed away last year. He proposed an interesting idea that psychosis is a price that we humans must pay because of the ability of language related to lateral specification of the brain. Although the theory did not gain acceptance within mainstream psychiatry, it resonated with me intuitively. The basic phenomenon of psychosis is the difficulty to distinguish between real and unreal, between mental images and facts in outside reality, and this evidently seems to be linked to the human-specific ability of self-reflection and language. Language is not just a library of signs, but a bridge between our inner mind and physical reality, with a very complex symbolic system and network crabbing across different parts of the brain. When our mind-body system, for one reason or another, disintegrates or functions asynchronously, this manifests itself in fractures of self-reflection and language, possibly producing psychotic experiences.

Tim Crow was also among the first researchers to suggest substantial genetic background in schizophrenia. The ideas of aetiology of psychotic experiences and disorders have varied during history from mainly biological or psychological explanations to society-derived or even religion-based interpretations. Shared prevailing scientific view is that there are certain biological factors that contribute to the risk of psychosis, but both psychological and society-related causes in varying emphasis play a role. During recent years the high interest in research of psychoses has been in genetics. Although rare variants with high risk for psychosis and a large variety of variants with small or medium risks have both been detected, the complexity of the phenomenon remains. However, we have learnt a lot about the interaction between environment and genetics, including interaction between the psyche and biology. There is not one psychosis, and there is not one explanation.

Finnish mental health professionals and patients have contributed to the research of psychoses in many ways, which is explored in the exhaustive overview as an invited editorial of professor Jaana Suvisaari. Professor Suvisaari has been and is both an important collaborator and a principal investigator in numerous and varying national and international studies, and her expertise and knowledge covers a wide range of different study populations, study problems and study methods, which gives an extremely valuable frame for the overview and its conclusions. Also remarkable is that alongside internationally appreciated high-quality research studies, the Finnish research in psychoses has succeeded in offering data and knowledge to our public service system to develop more effective and qualified practices to fulfill patients' needs.

Besides research with psychoses, I have had the opportunity to work both as a psychiatrist and as a collaborator with people who have had psychotic disorders. These encounters and interactions have profoundly affected me as a doctor and human. I have deeply understood that even at its highest, certainty is only partial, and this is good to remember in all patient contacts. As a person, the right for autonomy is one of the most important values and targets, and we should foster this regardless of person's diagnosis or illness. In this volume I am especially grateful for the articles focusing on personal recovery (Tolonen Jonna; Kämäräinen et al.) and a psychiatrist's own experiences as a psychiatric patient (Sadeniemi Minna). We have, over a couple of years, discussed

with editors Jääskeläinen and Karukivi about the possibility to have a personal view article inspired by Schizophrenia Bulletin First Person Accounts, and now we can offer that. Importantly, Sadeniemi points out the stigma of psychiatric disorders, which has not disappeared despite all the talk about mental health.

Finally, I would like to thank all those patients who have shared their colourful, rich, although sometimes frightening inner lives with me. There is not one normal or one extraordinary lifestyle that should be goal for everyone. There are numerous ways to live a meaningful life, which we should learn from each other and appreciate. Last year's editorial I picked literature as a means to support better mental health and to bridge the gap between humans, and now I would like to recommend the delightfully strange and funny books of Leonora Carrington, who, as a young woman, was hospitalized because of a psychosis diagnosis. However, her later career as a fine artist and novelist was brilliant and productive. The novel The Hearing Trumpet (1974) and the children's book The Milk of Dreams (2013) are examples of ways to think differently, and to find humour in odd and dangerous places and times.

In Psychiatria Fennica 2026 we want to thank all the reviewers who made possible both volume 2025 and volume 2026 with their high-quality expertise, covering this time the very large scale of research areas from arts to social sciences alongside medicine, psychology and biology. We publish all the names of referees who have given their consent. Together with editors Jääskeläinen and Karukivi we would like to point to the exceptional enthusiasm and interest that the referees have shown.

Tuula Kieseppä
Editor-in-Chief, Psychiatria Fennica

References

1. Crow Timothy J. Is schizophrenia the price that Homo sapiens pays for language? Schizophrenia Research 1997;28:127-141.

2. Gulland Anne. Tim Crow: psychiatrist, whose original thinking of the origins of schizophrenia ended up in the pages of Sebastian Faulks novel. BMJ 2025; 388:r313. http://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.r313.