

BJPpsych

The British Journal of Psychiatry

Editor-in-Chief: Professor Gin Malhi

Themed Issue 2024: Pathway to Delivery of Dementia Disease Modification



Shifting paradigms in dementia care: navigating new therapies and prevention strategies

Koychev et al

Estimating demand for potential disease-modifying therapies for Alzheimer's disease in the UK

Laurrel et al

Associations between multimorbidity and neuropathology in dementia: consideration of functional cognitive disorders, psychiatric illness, and dementia mimics

Hamilton et al

The usability and reliability of a smartphone application for monitoring future dementia risk in ageing UK adults

Reid et al

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A11 Editorial Board

BJPsych Editorial

- 187 Shifting paradigms in dementia care: navigating new therapies and prevention strategies**
Ivan Koychev, Judith Harrison, Paresch Malhotra, Ross Dunne and Bart Sheehan

Original Articles

- 189 Associations of an individual's need for cognition with structural brain damage and cognitive functioning/impairment: cross-sectional population-based study**
Lotte S. Truin, Sebastian Köhler, Irene S. Heger, Martin P. J. van Boxtel, Miranda T. Schram, Walter H. Backes, Jacobus F. A. Jansen, Martien M. C. J. M. van Dongen, Nanne K. de Vries, Hein de Vries, Simone J. P. M. Eussen, Coen D. A. Stehouwer, Marjolein E. de Vugt and Kay Deckers
- 198 Estimating demand for potential disease-modifying therapies for Alzheimer's disease in the UK**
Axel A. S. Laurell, Ashwin V. Venkataraman, Tatjana Schmidt, Marcella Montagnese, Christoph Mueller, Robert Stewart, Jonathan Lewis, Clare Mundell, Jeremy D. Isaacs, Mani S. Krishnan, Robert Barber, Timothy Rittman and Benjamin R. Underwood
- 205 Predictors of primary care psychological therapy outcomes for depression and anxiety in people living with dementia: evidence from national healthcare records in England**
Georgia Bell, Celine El Baou, Rob Saunders, Joshua E. J. Buckman, Georgina Charlesworth, Marcus Richards, Caroline Fearn, Barbara Brown, Shirley Nurock, Stuart Michael, Paul Ware, Natalie L. Marchant, Elisa Aguirre, Miguel Rio, Claudia Cooper, Stephen Pilling, Amber John and Joshua Stott
- 213 Association of cognitive reserve with the risk of dementia in the UK Biobank: role of polygenic factors**
Wenzhe Yang, Jiao Wang, Abigail Dove, Michelle M. Dunk, Xiuying Qi, David A. Bennett and Weili Xu
- 221 Predicting patients with dementia most at risk of needing psychiatric in-patient or enhanced community care using routinely collected clinical data: retrospective multi-site cohort study**
Sabina R. London, Shanquan Chen, Emad Sidhom, Jonathan R. Lewis, Emma Wolverson, Rudolf N. Cardinal, David Roalf, Christoph Mueller and Benjamin R. Underwood
- 230 Dissonance in the face of Alzheimer's disease breakthroughs: clinician and lay stakeholder acceptance, concerns and willingness to pay for emerging disease-modifying therapies**
Irina Kinchin, Sharon Walsh, Rachel Dinh, Margaret Kapuwa, Sean P. Kennelly, Ann-Marie Miller, Ann Nolan, Sean O'Dowd, Laura O'Philbin, Suzanne Timmons and Iracema Leroi
- 237 Associations between multimorbidity and neuropathology in dementia: consideration of functional cognitive disorders, psychiatric illness and dementia mimics**
Calum A. Hamilton, Fiona E. Matthews, Johannes Attems, Paul C. Donaghy, Daniel Erskine, John-Paul Taylor and Alan J. Thomas

- 244 Psychiatry in music – An empty bliss beyond this world – the music of The Caretaker as a representation of dementia**
Adam Flynn

- 245 The usability and reliability of a smartphone application for monitoring future dementia risk in ageing UK adults**

Graham Reid, Philip Vassilev, Jessica Irving, Triin Ojakäär, Liron Jacobson, Erin G. Lawrence, Jenny Barnett, Malika Tapparel and Ivan Koychev

Review

- 252 LGI1-antibody encephalitis: how to approach this highly treatable dementia mimic in memory and mental health services**

Sophie N. M. Binks, Adam Al-Diwani, Adam E. Handel, Tomasz Bajorek, Sanjay Manohar, Masud Husain, Sarosh R. Irani and Ivan Koychev

Columns

- 257 Contents of BJPsych Advances**

- 258 Psychiatry in History – Penal mental health and Soviet psychiatric abuses in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008)**

Alexander Smith, Robert van Voren and Michael Liebreiz

Themed Issue

This themed issue on Pathway to Delivery of Dementia Disease Modification was published without external financial support or sponsorship.

Cover picture

Conversation. 1990. William Utermohlen

In 1995 the artist, William Utermohlen was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Signs of his illness are retrospectively apparent in his works of 1990-91, notably in the "Conversation Pieces". These paintings, which can be seen as a celebration of William and his wife, Patricia's life together, describe the warmth and happiness of their apartment and the joy they took in the companionship of friends. However, signs of the disease that was about to strike William are also apparent in the shifting perceptions of space, objects, and people. They are premonitions of a new world of silence and sensory deprivation about to close in on the artist. Clearly the artist's most openly biographical pictures, this cycle centres on his wife, his friends, and his immediate environment: the objects, books, and paintings that have made his life meaningful and towards which he feels the greatest attachment.

In this painting, the artist seems inspired by the traditional composition of the Christian Annunciation, in which the angel Gabriel generally appears on the left lifting his hand towards the Virgin Mary who responds to his symbolic message seated on the right. In his personal version of an "Annunciation", Utermohlen uses the portrait of a close friend, James, gesturing across the table to the artist's wife, Patricia, who appears both thoughtful and puzzled. In the background behind James, a mirror reflects the entrance to the artist's studio.

To my mind, "Conversation" is the painting in which the artist visually communicates or announces to his wife, his consciousness of an inner disturbance that he feels intensely but can no longer articulate verbally.

Chris Boicos

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Photo Credit: Chris Boicos Fine Arts, Paris and Patricia Utermohlen.

We are always looking for interesting and visually appealing images for the cover of the Journal and would welcome suggestions or pictures, which should be sent to Dr Allan Beveridge, British Journal of Psychiatry, 21 Prescott Street, London, E1 8BB, UK or bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk.

