

EDITORIAL

Debates in Rehabilitation Medicine: A Collaborative Initiative of the European Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine and the Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine

At the start of the 21st century rehabilitation is faced with an unprecedented range of both opportunities and challenges. Opportunities range from new rehabilitation programmes made possible by advances in the neurosciences and engineering, advances in assistive health technology, adaptive design in architecture and smart homes, as well as the formulation of policies in light of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability*. The integration of these approaches for clinical practice can now rely on the universal framework of the World Health Organization (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and, in time, the standardized documentation of functioning based on its classification. Rehabilitation is also well prepared to adopt and spearhead new general trends in medicine, including person centeredness and personalized medicine, clinical pathways and coordinated care along the continuum of care and over the life-span, in light of cumulative comorbidities. Thanks to the use of the ICF for the standardized documentation of functioning across health conditions and along the continuum of care, rehabilitation is also uniquely positioned to lead the move towards the integrated use of data for clinical decision-making, outcome evaluation and clinical quality management, as well as cohort studies linked to national disability and health surveys to inform clinical practice, service provision and policy.

The main challenges we face include lack of funding, reduced or fractioned funding from various payers, and the lack of, or barriers to accessing, rehabilitation services, related to funding, but also to structural deficits in the acute and community setting. In many European countries we are faced with financial and attitudinal barriers towards developing academic capacity in rehabilitation research at universities, and a lack of suitable competitive funding programmes by national science foundations.

The European Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine, with its body of 40 distinguished academics from all over Europe and its primarily humanitarian and scientific mandate, aims to strengthen the conceptual and scientific foundation of rehabilitation by reflecting and debating on how to make best use of the opportunities and how to address emerging challenges.

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Dear readers and authors of the Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine

The present June issue of this journal is my last as Editor-in-Chief. It has been 4 intense years, as were those as Deputy Editor before that. I would like to thank the authors for submitting interesting papers on exciting studies, and our associate editors and referees for making qualified assessments to maintain the high scientific standards of our journal. Agneta Andersson and Hanna Bergström have been most instrumental in the daily work of the editorial office and I thank them sincerely.

I wish my successors Henk J. Stam (Rotterdam) and Kristian Borg (Stockholm) the best of luck!

Malmö in May 2016
Bengt H. Sjölund