

Jean O'Hara

Thoughts from the chair of the editorial board

As a departure from our usual editorial, I would like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts with you. I am writing this in July 2016, and have been struck by the extremes of attitudes and experiences that have been reported in the international media about people with intellectual disabilities this month. After ten years of planning, July saw 1,000 contenders with Down Syndrome from across 36 nations come together in Florence, Italy, for the first ever competition for Down Syndrome athletes called the Trisome Games. In the same month, a local British news outlet carried a story reportedly of the oldest woman in the world with Down Syndrome, celebrating her milestone 75th birthday. She was born in England in 1941 when the average life expectancy for someone with Down Syndrome was their mid-20s; she has also survived additional serious physical health problems in later life. These are very positive examples of the attitudinal changes society has made. We have made much progress, but progress also comes at a cost. Ann Auld reminds us in her blog about the realities of being a parent of a child (now an adult child) with Down Syndrome, sharing with us her insights and day to day experiences. This month, her blog begins "my child with Down syndrome faces the extinction of her kind and that's breaking my heart". The tragic killing this month of 19 residents in a care centre for people with intellectual disabilities in Sagami-hara, allegedly at the hands of a man who believed their lives were not worth living, has shocked the Japanese city and the rest of the world.

This journal is about advancing our understanding of the impact intellectual disabilities has on mental and physical wellbeing, as well as sharing research, learning and good practice in mental healthcare for people with intellectual disabilities and families and staff who support them. In future issues we would also like to consider the mental health implications of physical health conditions experienced by people with intellectual disabilities, as well as the physical health implications of mental health conditions.

We invite contributions from our readers to the journal and welcome organisations or individuals to suggest themes for future editions. We welcome submissions from the range of health and social care professionals and would encourage you to share your experiences and expertise. If you require any further information, please contact Eddie Chaplin at the Estia (e-mail: chapline@lsbu.ac.uk).

I hope you enjoy this edition of the journal and wish to thank you for your continuing support of *Advances in Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities*.