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Pandora searches the world literature for evidence, news and other sources on matters of interest (doesn't shy away from controversy) to bring to the reader. She welcomes comments and suggestions (via ip@rcpsych.ac.uk)

BJPsych International – Research Supplement

Pandora is pleased to announce the publication of the first Research Supplement of *BJPsych International* (May 2015), which is available (as is every issue of the journal) for free download at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/journals/ipinfol.aspx>.

The journal's mission is to address matters of practical relevance to patients' care with a focus (although not exclusively so) on the mental health needs of low- and middle-income countries as well as the socially excluded in higher-income countries. The Research Supplement covers a wide range of subjects, including service developments, undergraduate training, the use of guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the World Health Organization's Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) in various parts of the world, and an examination of research productivity in Arab countries.

Healthy gut fauna for healthy brain

Have you ever imagined that bacteria living in your gut could have 'conversations' with your brain? The gut microbiome and its role in the function of body and brain have been the focus of research in recent years. S. R. Dash's summary of the evidence on Medscape makes interesting reading. The gut microbiota are established at birth and alterations in their composition appear to play a role in a range of body and brain disorders. There is bidirectional communication between the gut and the brain, which can be direct or indirect,

via the enteric nervous system, neurotransmitter modulation, endocrine and immunoinflammatory systems. The gut microbes have been implicated in conditions such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, multiple sclerosis, anxiety and depression. A healthy balanced diet and good lifestyle encouraging growth of the right bacteria, living in harmony in the gut, are the road to good physical and mental health!

S. R. Dash (2015) The microbiome and brain health: what's the connection? Medscape, 24 March.

Precision medicine comes to psychiatry!

Are you disillusioned with successive diagnostic classification systems based on symptom categories? Like other medical disciplines, psychiatry is calling out for 'precision medicine'. Cancer research has led the way, with molecular diagnosis leading to better-defined treatments and improved outcomes. Could this be achieved in psychiatry? Modern biology, in particular cognitive, affective and social neuroscience, are producing new insights and 'mental' disorders are soon to be recognised as 'brain' disorders caused by disruptions to neural, cognitive and behavioural systems.

The National Institute for Mental Health has launched a 'precision medicine for psychiatry' project, the Research Domain Criteria (RDoC) initiative, with the aim of rethinking research into psychopathology. This has gained momentum, with over 1000 papers in the last year and with similar initiatives emerging in Europe, such as the Roadmap for Mental Health Research funded by the European Commission and a call from the European Union's Innovative Medicines Initiative

