



## Introducing the New Era of the *Journal of Primary Prevention: Journal of Prevention*

Zila M. Sanchez<sup>1</sup>

Accepted: 10 December 2021 / Published online: 22 January 2022

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2022

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the first edition of the renewed version of the well-known *Journal of Primary Prevention*. The journal begins the year 2022 affiliated with the European Society for Prevention Research (EUSPR) and receives a new name, which expands its scope: the *Journal of Prevention*. I am honored to be the new Editor-in-Chief, working closely with a highly qualified Editorial Board, including 11 Associate Editors who are widely respected experts in the field.

As the "Official Journal of The European Society for Prevention Research", we will seek to ensure that each edition of the journal reflects the Society's core mission, which is "to promote the development of prevention science, and its application to practice so as to promote human health and well-being through high-quality research, evidence-based interventions, policies, and practices."

My goal is to work closely with the Editorial Board to build on what has been achieved so far and further enhance the journal's content, visibility, and impact. We will encourage the journal to contribute to all emerging areas in the field of prevention science, with an emphasis on behavioral interventions, reflecting a focus on prevention practice—an essential link between academic research and professional practice.

We will also seek to attract new readers and authors. To do this, we are (1) expanding the target population described in the manuscripts and investigating health and social outcomes together; (2) including four new sections—Practitioner Narrative, Debate, Letter to the Editor, and Policy; (3) ensuring that each of the journal's six annual editions encompasses different methodologies and disciplines and reflects greater diversity of topic, population, and geographic location of the authors; and (4) committing to make speedy editorial decisions with the involvement of a highly qualified group of reviewers.

As a Brazilian woman, being the Editor-in-Chief of a journal affiliated with a European society—one with which I have had long been involved—allows me to

---

✉ Zila M. Sanchez  
zila.sanchez@unifesp.br

<sup>1</sup> Department of Preventive Medicine, Universidade Federal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

guarantee a greater diversity of thought and approach. It is, therefore, worth stating explicitly that the journal's scope goes beyond more economically developed countries, and we are open to receiving studies from different continents and cultures.

I also look forward to the *Journal of Prevention* engaging with current challenges in the field. In recent years, for example, there has been heavy investment in developing and evaluating behavior-change programs aimed at reducing risk factors for major mental health issues and risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs). While the learning has been significant, we need to reflect on two critical situations: (1) manualized programs are limited to small-scale implementation; and (2) their effects, when they exist, cannot impact on the prevalence and incidence of disease in the general population (not even at the national level and much less at the global level). This begs the question: are we investing our currencies in low-return stocks? In general, there is a considerable investment of time and resources in developing programs with limited implementation and evaluating them through efficacy studies in over-controlled conditions. Effectiveness evaluation, which relies on widespread implementation in real-life circumstances, preferably in a context of dissemination where the program has become a public policy, is rarer. In an effort to fill this gap we have seen the emergence of Implementation Science: a set of scientific strategies that allow adequate adaptation of preventive interventions to real-life conditions, aiming at sustainable and high-fidelity dissemination.

A related challenge is that robust scientific evidence of internationally successful prevention strategies is not transferred to compatible areas, even when it could be. Take the example of the worldwide reduction in tobacco consumption. Although we now know that the best strategy to reduce smoking and all chronic non-communicable diseases causally related to this behavior was a radical change in regulations, through public policies, we have not adopted the same approach for other risk behaviors. Physical inactivity and the consumption of alcohol, drugs, and ultra-processed foods should be tackled globally through preventive public policies. But they are not. In most countries, legislation to reduce the population's exposure to the main risk factors for early mortality is flawed or non-existent.

Environmental prevention is one of several promising fields for tackling the main risk factors for disease and harm at the population level that we expect to address in the *Journal of Prevention*. These relatively new intervention strategies and policies aim to decrease the opportunities for risky behaviors or promote healthier options by changing the environment to inconspicuously influence human behavior.

At this moment, immersed in third or fourth waves of cases and deaths from the Covid-19 pandemic, the need to give a voice and stage to prevention has never been more evident. Vaccination, one of the oldest and most effective preventive strategies for infectious diseases, has been remarkably successful in many countries in tackling Covid-19. However, many people have also rejected it, despite it being supported by strong scientific evidence. In this context, the planet needs more innovative investments in behavioral prevention to improve strategies to vaccinate seven billion people and convince them to accept the most effective pharmacological and non-pharmacological public health interventions. Furthermore, it is now time to develop and evaluate intelligent and effective interventions that help to reduce the chances of aggravation of physical and psychological complications that we have

already identified as resulting from social isolation and trauma experienced in recent months.

I will do my utmost, along with Associate Editors and other colleagues on the Editorial Board, to ensure that the *Journal of Prevention* plays its part in helping high-quality science to promote the common good.

The planet cries out for prevention, and our youth need it more than ever after Covid-19, but we are not listening. Many insist these days on ignoring scientific evidence, opening space to be manipulated by shady influencers who question the essence and existence of science. Insofar as we don't understand that *we are all responsible for all*, we will continue going adrift.

Zila M. Sanchez, PhD  
(*Zila van der Meer Sanchez Dutenhefner*)  
Associate Professor of Epidemiology  
Department of Preventive Medicine  
Universidade Federal de São Paulo

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.