

# Seeking Clarity Within Complex Psychiatric Presentations

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Physicians are masters at simplifying. Indeed, one of the most salient skills within child and adolescent psychiatry is helping families sort through complexity to determine diagnosis and treatment planning. From the first day of residency, we are taught the value of a comprehensive yet concise psychiatric formulation – a highly focused summary resulting from hours of interviews, chart reviews, brainstorming, problem solving, and, of course, the gestalt from years of training and experience. This issue of *JAACAP Connect* highlights the many ways we distill complexity within the field of child and adolescent psychiatry.

Complexity within child and adolescent psychiatry is ever-broadening, as we advance our understanding of comorbidity, biological and environmental contributions, and individual variability, among other factors. In this issue of *JAACAP Connect*, complexity is demonstrated by Atluru and colleagues (p. 5), as they consider medical and psychiatric symptoms within the presentation of failure to thrive. The differential includes the recently defined avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID), in which youth avoid food after an adverse eating event. The article reminds us of the importance of lifelong learning to expand our knowledge base.

Translating research into clinical care is complex, similarly requiring years of training and practice for successful mastery. This challenge inspired the primary mission of *JAACAP Connect*: “Promoting development of translational skills and publishing as education.” Although mentored publication experiences are critical for increasing competency in research literacy,<sup>1,2</sup> limits in our time often mean that scientific journal reading starts and stops at the abstract. Andrés Martin, MD, MPH, editor-in-chief of *JAACAP* and *JAACAP Connect*’s first

mentor, explains the key elements of the abstract for scientific publication (p. 19). This article is a must-read – as clinicians, we must recognize the purpose and limitations of the abstract, and as authors, the abstract is a window into the soul of the article.

In an era where schools and families push for quick fixes and rushed judgements, the importance of learning how to focus while considering everything cannot be underestimated. Chou and colleagues (p. 11) demonstrate how clinical vignettes can help students begin to recognize complex diagnoses, such as schizotypal personality disorders. The journey toward understanding often invokes personal reflection and motivation to help others. This awareness is articulated in our final two articles. Jacobi and Glowinski (p. 28) guide us through the history and controversies of foster care placement. Shapiro and colleagues (p. 22) convey the challenges of understanding and treating patients with traumatic brain injury and psychiatric comorbidity.

Clinicians filter volumes of patient information and research to determine what concepts to incorporate into diagnosis and treatment plans. The articles in this issue of *JAACAP Connect* remind us to slow down, consider the details, and extract the foundational elements to improve patient care – and to consider research and publication as a cornerstone for advancing our clinical skills and research literacy.

## References

1. Abrams MT, Patchan K, Boat TF. Research training in psychiatry residency: Strategies for reform. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2003.
2. Roane D, Inan E, Haeri S, Galynker I. Ensuring research competency in psychiatric residency training. *Acad Psychiatry*. 2009;33:215-220.

### Introducing the New Editor of *JAACAP Connect*: Oliver M. Stroeh, MD

**Dr. Stroeh**, former associate editor of *JAACAP Connect*, takes the helm of the *Connect* ship with this issue from Founding Editor Michelle S. Horner, DO. Based in New York City, Dr. Stroeh is the Clarice Kestenbaum, MD, Assistant Professor of Education and Training in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and associate director of the NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) Residency Training Program. His areas of interest include psychiatry training/education and psychotherapy.

Dr. Stroeh joined *Connect* as the John F. McDermott, MD, Assistant Editor-in-Residence in 2016. We are currently accepting applications for the 2018-2019 McDermott editor (deadline February 15th, 2017). For more information, please contact [support@aacap.org](mailto:support@aacap.org).



*Michelle S. Horner, DO, and Oliver M. Stroeh, MD, at AACAP's 63rd Annual Meeting in New York, 2016.*