

EDITORIAL

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# Editorial

Dianne Vella-Brodrick\* and Nikki Rickard

\* Correspondence: Dianne.Vella-Brodrick@monash.edu  
School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

Our vision for this new SpringerOpen Access journal, *Psychology of Well-Being: Research, Theory and Practice*, is to promote a distinctly eclectic approach to investigating well-being. When the prospect of becoming Editors in Chief for this journal arose, we viewed this as the ideal opportunity to promote the integration of knowledge gained from diverse research fields both within psychology and where psychology intersects with other disciplines (e.g., biology, economics, philosophy, sociology and neuroscience). Our co-editorship enables us to advance this idea of integrating disparate fields with a shared interest in well-being, as we ourselves have backgrounds in diverse yet complementary areas of psychological research, Nikki from psychobiological perspectives on emotion, memory and music and Dianne from subjective perspectives of well-being including meaning, sense of community, positive interventions and workplace wellness. Our editorial board members also possess a broad breadth of expertise which align well with the journal objectives.

It is also important to call on scholars who are able to review and integrate theory and research from different fields, similar to well-being reviews competently undertaken by Diener (1984) and Veenhoven (1984) and the more recent meta-analyses conducted by Lyubomirsky and colleagues (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Sin and Lyubomirsky 2009). Such works enable those in the field to assimilate knowledge already gained and to develop progressive studies. Hence, our aim for this new journal is to balance and integrate retrospection and innovation, and to simultaneously apply an interdisciplinary lens.

This journal also provides a forum for papers addressing psychological processes underlying and maintaining well-being, in terms of both enhanced positive functioning and prevention of psychological dysfunction. Studies examining mechanisms underlying interventions which enhance well-being and emotion regulation processes are most especially sought. Consistent with psychological principles, we support multi-level assessment methods and encourage authors to integrate subjective and objective (e.g., neurobiological and behavioural) indicators in their own research. We endorse the scientist-practitioner model and seek input from authors who are enabling knowledge transfer between laboratory settings to the field or clinical setting. While randomised controlled studies are important and should continue, research designs and methods which accommodate real world practice and address the issue of ecological validity are also required.

In launching this new journal, it is timely to acknowledge distinguished scholars such as Marie Jahoda, Norman Bradburn, Angus Campbell and Ed Diener for their commitment to well-being and positive mental health research despite a climate that did not

favour or readily publish studies on such topics. Their foundational work has been instrumental in understanding the factors that are associated with well-being. For example, we now have considerable insight into the role of personality and sociodemographic factors in influencing various components of well-being and we are clearer about the important constituents of psychological well-being (e.g., positive relations, purpose in life, autonomy). We have also operationalised key terms like subjective and psychological well-being, meaning, flow and strengths and have developed a range of corresponding measures. Based on the outstanding work of authors such as Alan Waterman, Corey Keyes, Felicia Huppert, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ken Sheldon and so many others, we now know more about the various types of well-being (reflecting hedonic and eudaimonic elements) and the strategies for deliberately enhancing individual and community-level well-being. We also commend the efforts of psychologists such as Richard Davidson and Carol Ryff and their teams, who have begun to uncover neurobiological markers of well-being. The accomplishments to date have been substantial and there is promise of ongoing and even more innovative progress with the high calibre of scholars currently dedicated to well-being research, many of whom we are fortunate to have on our editorial board.

Several of the major achievements occurring over the past decade were facilitated by the formation of "positive psychology"; a highly strategic movement which was skilfully planned and led by eminent scholars such as Martin Seligman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Chris Peterson and others. Positive psychology has provided an excellent springboard from which to tailor well-being programs and evaluate their efficacy. This is primarily where well-being research currently stands. However, it is important to continue to synthesise and progress existing knowledge, not just from within the field of positive psychology but from a broad range of disciplines and perspectives. Now we need to focus more intensely on understanding the specific mechanisms involved in the process of improving well-being so that new methods, particularly those which draw on the latest technologies, can be developed for individuals across the lifespan and across the globe. This is an inter-disciplinary task. The scientific research community is considerably more accepting of well-being studies today than it was several decades ago and collaborations with scholars from diverse backgrounds are more plausible as interest in well-being becomes more widespread. Moreover, the public demand for well-being programs is high and scientists, in partnership with practitioners, need to take a lead in providing the public with valuable and practical knowledge. Therefore, we have a responsibility to be even more expedient, strategic and united with our research activities. Our approach needs to include mixed methods, varied perspectives and inter-disciplinary expertise.

We have set ambitious objectives for this journal but we feel the research climate and resources are now supportive of these types of challenges. Well-being research has increased substantially over the past decade and the demand to disseminate these important research findings has also escalated. Consequently, a journal focused exclusively on well-being is warranted. Springer, a world leading publisher in social sciences, has astutely identified and attended to this need by introducing *Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research and Practice*. In addition, Springer supports the notion that scientific findings should be accessed by all and have subsequently employed an online, open access format. This means that the end users will now also be able to read

and incorporate the latest research findings into their practice, helping to narrow the gap between science and practice. This scientist-practitioner partnership is especially important for the field of well-being which has in the past been tainted by pockets of poorly informed practice. Professional, evidence-based practice for enhancing well-being is now more feasible and this means that the credibility, value and longevity of well-being research will be enhanced. We hope that this new journal will contribute to this positive trajectory for well-being theory, research and practice.

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