The trends towards post-inclusion: Another post-truth or an emerging reality?

Some may consider it to be an over-reach, but if we are now living in a post-truth world, as has been so often suggested in 2016 – indeed, 'post truth' is the Oxford Dictionaries' word of 2016 - it is hard to believe that we got to this point given all the warning signs. All humans have core needs for belonging. Although it is acknowledged that across the globe, and throughout history, we have tended to feel more secure around people 'like us', there are increasing signs that as a general public we feel more confident to exclude (or not include) 'others' in our society. Shifts in government policy and the dominant discourse surrounding asylum seekers and people of Muslim faith are perhaps the clearest examples or recent warning signs of such 'othering'. Less obvious developments include the public outrage and subsequent withdrawal of the 'Safe Schools Program' – a program designed to promote the inclusion and safety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and inter-sex students in Australia, and the findings of the recent (Australian) Senate Inquiry into the inclusion and educational outcomes of students with disabilities. It is therefore argued that greater consciousness-raising, advocacy, and action is required if we are to redress this emerging trend, and ultimately, avoid finding ourselves in an era of 'post-inclusion'.

In this edition of JoSI, we again see a strong focus and significant effort directed towards the need for greater inclusion and opportunities for people with disabilities. These include issues relating to the eradication of inequalities and greater inclusion of children with special needs in schools as well as the attitudes of architecture students towards universal design principles. The value of therapeutic approaches, or more specifically, the use of Talking Mats with people with Alzheimer's disease is highlighted. This edition also notes the need for greater consciousness raising with respect to structural influences on the decision-making power of children in Pakistan, and the stigma and exclusion faced by midlife women who have not had children in the Australian context.

The first paper, by Macaulay and colleagues from Monash University, seeks to provide further insights into the reasons why the same issues of educational inequality and problems with the inclusion of children with disabilities in school keep being highlighted in different reports and inquiries across Australia. Having noted the severe and long-lasting impacts on students, families and the rest of society more broadly, Bourdieu's critical social theory is used to help understand issues relating to access, equity and inclusion of children with disabilities. In noting the associated political implications, the author's highlight three key areas to be redressed. These include issues relating to cultural problems, economic capital and the value or utility of education; the cumulative impact of which appear to be exponential. In recognition that these issues are beyond the realm of influence of students or their families, the need for urgent, significant reform across educations sectors is highlighted.

One example where an understanding of the issues of access and equity appears to have been embedded is the application and use of universal design principles. The study undertaken by Larkin and colleagues from Deakin University, sought to examine architecture students' attitudes towards universal design principles and if and how these may differ as a result of undertaking, or not undertaking, previous study in diversity issues and universal design. The identification of potential attitudinal influences regarding the importance and use of universal design principles demonstrates the potential value of research in helping to inform cultural change, and ultimately, the development of more inclusive environments and societies.

A further demonstration of the value of research in improving quality of life outcomes is provided in the paper by Reitz and Dalemans. The Dutch study, investigated the use of 'Talking Mats' as a low technology, communication aid for engaging people with Alzheimer's

Disease. Having translated the English version of this communication aid, the results of this small study provided further support for the use of Talking Mats as a tool for shared decision-making with people with Alzheimer's Disease. Indeed, the results indicate these benefits extend across language groups which has significant implications given Alzheimer's Disease is the leading cause of dementia globally.

The results of another international study, undertaken in the Peshawar District of Pakistan, demonstrates how children's incapacitated decision-making may be both socially determined and compounded when it further constrains opportunities for social inclusion or community participation more broadly. The study of 500 children undertaken by Allah and Shah provides a powerful demonstration of how structural factors such as gender, religion, family background and poverty influence psychosocial outcomes such as decision-making power and their associated effects on community participation. The results of the study are used to discuss implications for (and the importance of) children's participation at the family and community level, and the need to address the gender and religious based inequities identified in this study.

Finally, the study by Turnbull and colleagues focusses on the social exclusion of Australian women who have not had children. The findings that midlife women without children feel stigmatised or stereotyped are used to underline the need to ensure all women, have an opportunity to participate, or be included in, all life domains and to the challenge the pro-natalism that exists in society. Perhaps the most famous example of this was the chiding of Australia's first female prime minister for being unsuitable for leadership because she was "deliberately barren". Although these comments were made by the controversial Senator Bill Heffernan, they represent the prevailing view or expectation that women will be (or should be) mothers - underscoring what is meant by pro-natalism and the subtle and not so subtle ways in which women without children may feel socially excluded.

The results of the international and Australian studies featured in this edition of JoSI, continue to shed light on what is needed to improve social inclusion and related outcomes across borders, populations and settings. To this end, we have a special 2017 edition planned on the topic of 'social inclusion in health' and are currently calling for articles for this issue which will be led by Associate Professor Lynne Briggs as Guest Editor. Possible topics for the special edition include how issues of social inclusion/exclusion affect health at the individual or population level, how different health conditions affect opportunities for social inclusion and/or the need for, or effectiveness of, interventions and strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of marginalised groups. Further information about the aims and scope of the special edition is available on the Journal's website. As always, we look forward to your contributions and thank you for your continued support of JoSI.

Paul Harris PhD

Editor

School of Human Services and Social Work

Menzies Health Institute Queensland

Griffith University