



Special Issue on **Overview on Empathy: The Role of Interpersonal Relations in Brain, Neurologic Outcomes, and Patient Welfare**

CALL FOR PAPERS

Different publications in the fields of neurology, psychiatry, and psychology demonstrate that there is growing interest in the theme of empathy, the ability to understand the emotional states of others. The human brain is structurally able to relate as evidenced by functional neuroimaging studies and as suggested by the existence of mirror neurons. There is currently much interest in identifying a social brain: a circumscribed network of brain regions specialized for the social domain. Theory of mind, for example, is one of the issues that concern the social brain and that probably explain some structural characteristics of patients with pervasive developmental disorders. In clinical practice interpersonal relations have an important role in determining outcomes and patient welfare. With neurological and psychiatric disorders that include cognitive deficits and psychological problems, relationships are significantly affected and impair the quality of life of patients and their families. Many symptoms, such as paranoia, social isolation, and impulse control disorders, directly influence the interaction with other persons. The associated stigma moreover results in further dysfunction in social and interpersonal relations. Evidence from the literature shows that correct relationship management may contribute significantly to the prevention and treatment of certain disease conditions.

The main aim of this special issue is to provide a platform for the discussion of the major research challenges and achievements on the topic.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Functional neuroimaging studies on networks involved in empathy and interpersonal relationships
- ▶ Neuroendocrine and immunological response to psychosocial stress
- ▶ Oxidative stress in autism
- ▶ Assertive communication
- ▶ The negative side of empathy
- ▶ Doctor-patient relationships and communication
- ▶ Intervention programs based on the development of empathy
- ▶ Experience and clinical trials in psychiatric rehabilitation
- ▶ Epidemiology and prevention
- ▶ Quality of life

Authors can submit their manuscripts via the Manuscript Tracking System at <http://mts.hindawi.com/submit/journals/bn/erid/>.

Lead Guest Editor

Paola V. Cali, Medi.Gest Srl, Ragusa, Italy
paola.v.cali@gmail.com

Guest Editors

Erminia Albanese, University Hospitals of North Midlands, Staffordshire, UK
erminiaalb@yahoo.it

Josanne Aquilina, Mater Dei Hospital, Msida, Malta
josanne.aquilina@gov.mt

Catherine Belzung, Institut Universitaire de France, Tours, France
catherine.belzung@univ-tours.fr

Manuscript Due

Friday, 19 August 2016

First Round of Reviews

Friday, 11 November 2016

Publication Date

Friday, 6 January 2017