

## Guest editorial

# Celebrating diversity: healing and caring

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When I was asked to write this editorial I accepted readily, and I immediately thought of the topic that I wanted to write about, but as time passed I found that I had a title but was not able to write down the myriad of thoughts in my mind during my day and even invading my dreams at night. I usually find it very easy to talk about things I am passionate about, but when it comes to putting them on paper they seem to evaporate or don't sound as expressive as I thought they would. So when I got the drive to write again I decided to modify the title and add a focus on the word *healing*. I was motivated to do so when I started taking care of my friend's daughter who was in a very bad car accident a few weeks ago. This accident has turned her family's life upside down. It took a family who was celebrating their daughter's graduation from school and preparations to go to university in seconds to a life of turmoil and suffering because their daughter was left paraplegic. I look at how a few seconds have inflicted so much hurt and suffering on her and her family and even their friends, and the emotional, physical, spiritual and financial cost that this suffering has created. I also look at her, her spirit and motivation to start the rehabilitation and healing, not dwelling on the causes of the pain and suffering she has gone through.

Thinking of what my friends are going through, I look around me and I see similar pictures, where because of their diversity, whether it is racial, political, economic, gender related, social or religious, there are a lot of people who are hurt and are suffering. I see people losing their homes, their families, their health, their jobs, their honour and self respect because they are different. I see us as human beings turning into beasts and monsters, being creative in how we hurt each other and how we can maximise the suffering we inflict on those we have power over. I see the waste of lives, money and energy that has been caused by inflicting suffering that far outweighs what is spent on building and development. I see our leaders in all the different sectors focusing on themselves and the

heights they can achieve in terms of finance or power, with very few looking at those who are marginalised in their organisations or in society and who need their help. I believe that the answer lies in focusing on healing. So my editorial is an invitation for each and every one of us to invest in healing. We need to look at healing from a holistic perspective, not only focusing on the body but also integrating the soul and spirit in this healing process, healing the suffering of those who have lost their health, their loved ones or their homes, and healing ourselves and thus increasing our capacity to care for and promote healing in others.

Health professionals need to rediscover their capacity for caring and healing; alleviating suffering is our proper work. We need to capitalise on the richness of our diversities, to build on the diversity of our talents, our cultures and in what we can give to those around us. There are many ways of healing that have been practised by various cultures throughout the centuries. Some cultures promote healing through prayer while others follow a specified set of rituals. We need to learn about these and maybe we can discover ways to complement the care we provide and our healing practices. We need to practise them as individuals in healing ourselves, and share them with others so that we spread this culture of healing. I believe that in focusing on healing we need to promote tolerance, and we need to celebrate our differences and how they enrich all aspects of our lives, because tolerance overcomes bias, segregation and stereotyping and focuses on accepting and integrating differences. Let us invite healing into our hearts, minds and souls.

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