

Editorial

The *Journal of Comorbidity* affiliates with the Scottish School of Primary Care

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The *Journal of Comorbidity* is pleased to announce a new partnership with the Scottish School of Primary Care (SSPC). The SSPC is a virtual school comprising all Scottish academic departments with significant primary care research output. This currently includes the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, and St Andrews. This is the second important partnership that the journal has formed to strengthen ties with professional primary care networks with an interest in comorbidity and multimorbidity research. It is anticipated that this new collaboration will increase the journal's reach and help advance research, discussion, and knowledge about comorbidity and multimorbidity.

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The Scottish School of Primary Care

Since its inception in 2000, the SSPC has established a reputation for research excellence, attracting new research funding to Scottish universities. The school aims to support the development of a sustainable, equitable, high-quality primary care service that meets the needs of the people of Scotland. Working towards this vision, the SSPC's current strategic objectives are to:

- Inform key stakeholders by collating relevant available national and international evidence, as well as actively contributing to the growing evidence base
- Support the continuing growth of academic primary care in Scotland
- Promote Scottish academic primary care internationally.

The SSPC was created with the intention of increasing research capacity by facilitating collaboration across all of Scotland's University Departments of General Practice, investigating important aspects of general practice and primary care. It received core funding for several years from the Scottish Funding Council, the Chief Scientist Office (CSO), Scottish Council for Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education and its successor NHS Education for Scotland (NES), as well as from the Scottish Government.

In recent years, there has been a particularly strong focus on policy-related research and engagement with a

wide range of stakeholders within Scotland and beyond. Scotland, like many countries, is facing complex health-care issues relating to the ageing population and health inequalities in younger people, both of which are underpinned by increasing levels of multimorbidity. Integration of health and social care is high on the political agenda, as is the transformation of primary care. A new general practitioner (GP) contract is being negotiated in Scotland that will involve GP practices working together in clusters to improve local population health. Expanding the multidisciplinary team and training additional staff to take on some of the roles of GPs is expected to reduce GP workload, enabling them to spend more time with patients whose care is more challenging.

The school is currently funded by the Scottish Government to lead an evaluation of the many new models of primary care that are currently being tested throughout Scotland. This work also includes literature reviews and in-depth case studies. Several briefing papers have also been produced by academics within the school that summarize the evidence base around specific topics, assess whether – and how – the evidence has been implemented in Scotland, and suggest how the new GP Clusters could use this evidence to inform quality improvements in local healthcare.

The individual primary care academic groups within the six universities that make up the current membership of the SSPC still continue their own high-quality research agendas in primary care, with an increasing focus on multimorbidity and comorbidity, treatment burden, polypharmacy, early detection of cancer, and organization of care, including the role of nurses and allied healthcare professionals.

By forming a partnership with the *Journal of Comorbidity*, the SSPC further recognizes the importance of research on comorbidity and multimorbidity for primary healthcare professionals and policymakers. The partnership is a rational next step that will benefit both organizations.

Journal of Comorbidity

The *Journal of Comorbidity* is the only international, open-access and peer-reviewed journal devoted entirely to comorbidity and multimorbidity. The journal's mission is to bring research, knowledge, expertise, and insight together to optimize the management of patients with comorbidity/multimorbidity. The journal aims to provide a high-quality resource to fulfil the following objectives:

- Highlight comorbidity/multimorbidity as a fundamental component of overall patient care
- Enhance the understanding of comorbidity/multimorbidity
- Identify and fill gaps in the evidence on comorbidity/multimorbidity
- Provide comprehensive guidance on preventing and managing comorbidity/multimorbidity
- Promote the collaboration of multidisciplinary healthcare providers.

The journal publishes original clinical and experimental research articles, guidelines, policies, editorials, commentaries, protocols, and critical review articles, as well as proceedings of congresses. The Editorial Board also welcomes ideas and suggestions for special issues dedicated to unique themes.

The *Journal of Comorbidity* is already affiliated with the Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC) [1] and is looking forward to working with the SSPC and its members to expand the community of healthcare professionals with an interest in comorbidity/multimorbidity. Key highlights of the partnership include:

- *Journal of Comorbidity* is now an endorsed publication of the SSPC
- Discounted article publication fee for SSPC members – the journal encourages members to consider publishing their relevant work in the journal
- Opportunities for SSPC members to be involved with the journal
- *Journal of Comorbidity* to have a presence at the annual SSPC conference.

The Journal Editors welcome this new partnership and encourage other societies and networks to partner with the *Journal of Comorbidity* to further advance the knowledge and communication of comorbidity/multimorbidity research.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Reference

- 1 Smith SM, Reeve J, Gunn J, Hill NR, Fortin M, O'Donnell CA, et al. The Journal of Comorbidity affiliates with the Society for Academic Primary Care. *J Comorbidity* 2016;6(2):73–5. View Item.