

From the Editor's Desk

By Kamaldeep Bhui CBE, Gin S. Malhi

The Psychiatry Ashes: I can't believe it's not cricket!

'Cricket is basically baseball on valium'. Robin Williams.

I am joined in this month's column by Gin Malhi, Editor of the *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry (ANZJP)*, to make a joint announcement for the Christmas editions of the *BJPsych* and *ANZJP*. As we in the UK try to match the high-speed European trains in our run up to Brexit, we are renewing friendships with the rest of the world, including Commonwealth cousins, with whom we have much in common. It was in this 'corridor of uncertain destinies' that I naively fielded a beamer from my old friend, Gin. At a recent meeting he pitched a novel idea of playing a version of the Ashes Test cricket series featuring teams from the editorial boards of our respective journals. I had thought he would be cured of this idea on return to Australia, as surely he had more pressing pursuits. Clearly, sport and competition are important to him; perhaps he has mistaken me for the Indian cricketer Ricky Bhui with whom I have no family connection. Either way, Gin doggedly set forward on an ambitious plan. Thus, the idea of a friendly competition between old mates was conceived and the Psychiatry Ashes Test was born.

Currently, the real Ashes Test is taking place down under, and so the timing of our game couldn't be more apt. The Members and Fellows of both Royal Colleges are akin to twins separated at birth. We have similar 'childhoods' with respect to training, examinations and clinical experiences, but then key differences emerge as adolescents and young adults because of inevitably diverse epigenetic influences stemming from diametrically opposing milieu; the fresh air and sunshine hours index raises 'worries' in England and 'no worries' in Australia despite the density of crocodiles, snakes and spiders.

There are also some scholarly if not grave reasons for playing the psychiatry equivalent of the Ashes. The members of the two Royal Colleges have much in common; their respective flagship journals (*ANZJP* and *BJPsych*) serve similar functions, and it seems fitting to have more interaction that harnesses mutual respect and competition, not to mention conquering the colonial

past, or mystic writing pad in Freud's terms, and replacing it with a celebration of scientific advances in psychiatry around the world. Playing scholarly cricket will, we hope, ignite wider interest in psychiatric practice and its contributions to understanding and advancing clinical care, as well as transforming academic psychiatry into a spectator sport involving league tables and metrics, athletes and managers. As a community, we aim to build knowledge, stand on the shoulders of our predecessors, and make small but significant advances in care practices. These shared goals unite the readership, authors, and the respective editorial boards. Thus, aside from some light-hearted sport in the midst of challenging times in clinical and academic environments, the Psychiatry Ashes intends to highlight the important role of psychiatric sciences in the advancement of medicine and societal wealth and health.

The 2018 Psychiatry Ashes will be played within the pages of the two journals over two innings and will involve two teams drawn from the respective Editorial Boards. The two teams have been selected by the two Captains (Editors of the two journals) and players have to be affiliated to the respective journals (e.g. on the editorial board or having served as an editor or advisor). Many factors played a role in the selection of both teams, and of these, availability to play and having an interest in doing so were key, but players also had to be actively involved in their chosen journal either in terms of submitting papers for publication or reviewing them. In addition players also had to be a good sport, be in possession of a competitive academic profile, and have demonstrated a flare for publishing, especially in recent years. In keeping with cricket there will be 11 players on each team and each player (in discussion with their captain) will identify papers that can be used for 'batting'^a in the game. Citations^b to these papers will score 'runs' and results will be provided regularly in both journals.

The match will begin in January 2018 and run throughout the rest of the year. Further information about the adjudication of the Psychiatry Ashes can be found in an editorial published contemporaneously in the *ANZJP*¹ and more detailed rules along with the names of the team members will be provided in a subsequent issue in the new year. In the meantime it is time to put on your whites, put on the kettle, and ensure a good supply of tea, buttered toast, and cakes in anticipation of the first innings.

1 Malhi GS, Bhui K, The Psychiatry Ashes. It's not cricket! *Aust NZ J Psychiatry* 2017, in press (<https://doi.org/10.1177/0004867417741561>).

a. Papers published in *ANZJP* or *BJPsych* cannot be selected as batting papers.
b. Citations in *ANZJP* and *BJPsych* will not count towards the scores of either team.

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