Research activity in the field of counselling psychology has been growing relatively fast in Greece, raising new scientific challenges and generating new knowledge relevant to the Greek population and culture. In an effort to disseminate the current advances in this special field and to stimulate discussion on the future research directions, this special issue of The European Journal of Counselling Psychology is dedicated to recent developments in counselling and counselling psychology research in Greece.

The scientific fields of Counselling and Counselling Psychology are fairly new in Greece and it is primarily due to the recently established post-graduate programmes that these psychology specialties have become better known in our country. Thanks to these and other European post-graduate counsellor education programs, mainly in Anglo-Saxon countries, Greek students now have the opportunity to systematically study and practice counselling in various settings, drawing from diverse orientations, theories and models. As a result, many young scientists have poured into the field with some of them occupying relevant academic positions in the main Greek universities. They constitute a very active, albeit small, research community, conducting counselling, teaching and investigating various issues related to the specific characteristics of the Greek culture and population.

To give a flavor of this activity, six articles have been invited, which we believe provide a representative sample of the research currently being carried out in our country. The articles have been presented at the 5th PanHellenic Counselling Psychology Conference, which took place at the University of Patras in November 2014. All articles address issues that are considered important regarding therapeutic applications of counselling Greek people. In addition, all studies have been conducted by eminent Greek scholars and their collaborators, using rigorous methodological approaches, which varied from qualitative to quantitative methods and from case studies to longitudinal research designs. By reading these papers, one gets a feeling for the variability of the topics that Greek counsellors and counselling psychologists deal with, as well as their propositions of where future research should mostly focus.
The first three papers examine issues related to children’s special physical psychological or mental states. The last two papers focus more on family related issues. The fourth paper is the only one touching upon the effects of the economic crisis on people’s well-being. This longitudinal study tries to investigate the role of the economic crisis, which started in Greece around 2010, on several psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and stress.

The special issue begins with a paper co-authored by Angeliki Gena, Petros Galanis, Erifylli Tsirempolou, Eleni Michalopoulou, and Kalliopi Sarafidou regarding “Parent-Training for Families with a Child with ASD: A Naturalistic Systemic Behavior Analytic Model.” The paper aims at presenting the importance of early intervention in the case of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), based on an intensive parent-training programme. Although the study described in the paper was based on only two cases of toddlers, it managed to highlight the procedures through which such a program can prove its effectiveness.

The second paper entitled “Parents’ and School Career Counsellors’ Evaluations of the Occupational Competence of Children with Dyslexia” is by Kleopatra Diakogiorgi and Ermioni Tsiligirian. It studies the cognitions of parents of dyslexic children and school career counsellors about dyslexic children’s career choices by examining their evaluations of occupational competence (EOCs). Their findings might have important implications for special educator and counsellor training programs, as well as for the provision of career counselling services to children with learning disabilities.

In the following paper, "Utilizing Storytelling to Promote Emotional Well-Being of Children With a Distinct Physical Appearance: The Case of Children Who Wear Eyeglasses," Andreas Brouzos, Stephanos P. Vassilopoulos, and Kalliopi Moschou present a very interesting study which was designed to investigate the efficacy of group narrative intervention in supporting a sample of preadolescents with unusual physical traits.

The fourth study which was conducted by Christos Pezirkianidis, Anastassios Stalikas, Evgenia Efstathiou, and Eirini Karakasidou dealt with “The Relationship Between Meaning in Life, Emotions and Psychological Illness: The Moderating Role of the Effects of the Economic Crisis.” The study examines the moderating role of the economic crisis, which affects the majority of the Greek population, on their psychological well-being. As such, it does have important implications for prevention and intervention in counselling psychology.

Next, is a paper by Pinelopi Patrika and Eleftheria Tseliou on “The ‘Blame Game’: Discourse Analysis of Family Members’ and Therapist Negotiation of Problem Definition in Systemic Family Therapy.” It presents a discourse analysis of the ways in which blame and responsibility are negotiated between family members in family therapy. It examines the processes of negotiation of the ‘problem’ within systemic family therapy conversations and focuses on blaming sequences, which constitute a pertinent issue in family therapy theory and practice. As such, it is valuable for family therapy process research and for promoting therapist reflexivity.

Finally, the last paper of this issue “Quality of Sibling Relationship and Substance Misuse: A Comparative Study” is by Anastasia Tsampari and Elvisa Frokaj and deals with the quality of the sibling relationship in siblings with drug use. This comparative qualitative-quantitative study sheds further light on sibling relationship with substance misuse, as it comes up with a new category of loss/mourning. Changes in the behaviour of the sibling with drug use triggers the psychological process of mourning in the sibling with no drug use, who experiences loss, anger and neglect towards their parents, often leading to a reversal of roles. Such findings might be valuable for the assessment of family functioning.
We would like to use this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to the contributors for their informative and well-illustrated work. They put a lot of effort into translating this work into English and, thus, helped us to provide a glimpse of the exciting research currently taking place in Greece. We believe readers will find their contribution important and enlightening and, hopefully, will walk away with some fresh ideas about rigorous research yet to be carried out, as well as about best practices regarding the provision of counseling and psychotherapeutic services to Greek populations.

The guest editors

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