

# The Ernst Strüngmann Forum

Founded on the tenets of scientific independence and the inquisitive nature of the human mind, the Ernst Strüngmann Forum is dedicated to the continual expansion of knowledge. Through its innovative communication process, the Ernst Strüngmann Forum provides a creative environment within which experts scrutinize high-priority issues from multiple vantage points.

This process first begins with the identification of themes. By nature, a theme constitutes a problem area that transcends classic disciplinary boundaries. It is of high-priority interest, requiring concentrated, multidisciplinary input to address the issues involved. Proposals are received from leading scientists active in their field and are selected by an independent Scientific Advisory Board. Once approved, a steering committee is convened to refine the scientific parameters of the proposal and select the participants. Approximately one year later, the central meeting, or Forum, is held to which circa forty experts are invited.

Preliminary discussion for this theme began in 2010, when Steven Silverstein brought the initial idea to our attention. Together with Bitá Moghaddam and Til Wykes, the resulting proposal was approved by the Scientific Advisory Board and from June 27–29, 2011 the steering committee was convened. The committee, comprised of Anil Malhotra, John McGrath, Andreas Meyer-Lindenberg, Bitá Moghaddam, Steven Silverstein, and Til Wykes, identified the key issues for debate and selected the participants for the Forum, which took place in Frankfurt am Main, from July 22–27, 2012.

A Forum is a dynamic think tank. The activities and discourse that accompany it begin well before participants arrive in Frankfurt and conclude with the publication of this volume. Throughout each stage, focused dialog is the means by which participants examine the issues anew. Often, this requires relinquishing long-established ideas and overcoming disciplinary idiosyncrasies, which otherwise could inhibit joint examination. When this is accomplished, however, new insights begin to emerge.

This volume conveys the synergy that arose out of myriad discussions between diverse experts, each of whom assumed an active role. It contains two types of contributions. The first provides background information to key aspects of the overall theme. Originally written in advance of the Forum, these chapters have been extensively reviewed and revised to provide current understanding on these topics. The second (Chapters 5, 9, 13, and 17) summarizes the extensive group discussions that transpired. These chapters should not be viewed as consensus documents nor are they proceedings. Instead, their goal is to transfer the essence of the discussions, expose the open questions that still remain, and highlight areas in need of future enquiry.

An endeavor of this kind creates its own unique group dynamics and puts demands on everyone who participates. Each invitee contributed not only their time and congenial personality, but a willingness to probe beyond that which is evident. For this, I extend my gratitude to all.

A special word of thanks goes to the steering committee, the authors of the background papers, the reviewers of the papers, and the moderators of the individual working groups: Robert Buchanan, Michael O'Donovan, Patricio O'Donnell, and Richard Keefe. To draft a report during the week of the Forum and bring it to its final form in the months thereafter is never a simple matter. For their efforts and tenacity, I am especially grateful to Aiden Corvin, Craig Morgan, Kevin Mitchell, and Vera Morgan—the rapporteurs of the discussion groups. Most importantly, I extend my sincere appreciation to Steven Silverstein, Bitá Moghaddam, and Til Wykes. As chairpersons of this 13th Strüngmann Forum, their commitment ensured a most vibrant intellectual gathering.

A communication process of this nature relies on institutional stability and an environment that encourages free thought. The generous support of the Ernst Strüngmann Foundation, established by Dr. Andreas and Dr. Thomas Strüngmann in honor of their father, enables the Ernst Strüngmann Forum to conduct its work in the service of science. The Science Advisory Board guides this work and ensures the scientific independence of the Ernst Strüngmann Forum. Supplemental financial support for this theme was received from the German Science Foundation, and the Frankfurt Institute of Advance Studies provided the backdrop for this intellectual exercise.

Long-held views are never easy to put aside. Yet, when this is achieved, when the edges of the unknown begin to appear and gaps in knowledge are able to be defined, the act of formulating strategies to fill such gaps becomes a most invigorating exercise. We hope that this volume will convey a sense of this lively endeavor. Most importantly, we hope that this joint examination of schizophrenia will lead to a novel conceptualization of the disorder and accelerate advances in treatment development and prevention efforts.

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