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Revitalizing the Future of Personality Disorders Science and Practice: A Call for Innovation

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A mere decade ago, personality disorder (PD) research was poised to become the vanguard of psychopathology science in an era marked by the profound influence of personality on psychiatric taxonomy, driven by transformative changes in PD diagnosis (Krueger, 2013). However, today, the field presents a stagnant panorama, marked by a conspicuous lack of advancement in methodologies, conceptual frameworks, and consequential implications for therapeutic interventions.

The publication of the Alternative Model of Personality Disorders in DSM-5 has notably shaped the trajectory of PD research in the past decade, with a predominant focus on psychometric approaches. Regrettably, the current research orientation within the PD field is failing to yield scientific advancements crucial for deepening our understanding of PD or developing treatments that address the needs of PD patients. Furthermore, the current state of our field lacks appeal for emerging scholars and young clinical scientists, primarily due to narrow research foci lacking clinical relevance, methodological stagnation, and an adversarial tone in a significant portion of current research.

To address these issues, in this special section, we aim to reshape this narrative with a positive, aspirational focus on the future. We welcome submissions of empirical or conceptual papers that have the potential to significantly advance the field of PDs. The emphasis should be on advancements with clear clinical implications, aiming for critical tests of existing models, the integration and expansion of existing models, or introducing promising new perspectives and methodologies. Evaluating new conceptual models requires a critical consideration of true innovation vs. recapitulation of existing work (i.e., jingle-jangle fallacies), a willingness to critically test researchers' preferred models, and the application of cutting-edge assessment and analytic methods. In addition to PD scholars, we especially encourage submissions from researchers who do not primarily study PD and may be able to bring a fresh perspective and novel methods. Collaborations among PD scholars and scholars outside the field is another path to innovation and would be welcome. Though we outline specific questions of interest below to concretize the section's goals, it is important to note that these are not meant to restrict researchers' creativity, and we welcome other relevant topics for the section.

Goal 1: Establish clinically useful distinctions in the field of PDs. This could include:

- differentiating PD from other disorders and personality traits
- understanding changes in PD features over time during critical transitions or developmental periods
- applying new methods and multi-method designs to connect PD research with clinical applications
- ensuring generalizability of existing models to diverse populations
- understanding how context and environmental factors contribute to PD symptoms
- examining PD processes at different temporal resolutions
- exploring advanced assessment and statistical approaches, like passive/data and genomics

- marshaling qualitative evidence and participatory studies, including lived experiences
- using intervention designs to examine PD processes and bridge the gap between research and practice

Goal 2: Understanding the etiology of PDs. <u>This could include:</u>
- assessing basic etiological processes specific to PDs as well as heterotypic continuity in these processes
- developing models that capture the common occurrence of multiple personality problems and account for non-specific causes over time
- exploring developmental trajectories of PD problems from childhood to adulthood, considering environmental, dispositional, and transactional influences
- effectively mapping individual progression along these trajectories
- generating evidence linking PD severity to developmental maturation in self/interpersonal functioning
- assessing within-person temporal models of personality processes to test the theory that achieving certain developmental milestones is associated with a lower likelihood of symptom exacerbation under stress
- understanding how different levels of functioning interact to produce symptoms
- examining developmental processes to identify maximally effective prevention and treatment targets

Abstract Submission

Please submit an abstract (250 words or fewer) of a proposed submission through the journal portal by April 1, 2024. Do not send a completed manuscript without approval of the abstract. When submitting, please select the Article Type category "Letter of Intent for Special Issue/Selection" in the Editorial Manager system. We will invite full submissions following a review of these proposals by May 1, 2024. Invited, full-length submissions will be due October 1, 2024. All submissions for this special section will go through the normal peer-review process, with no guarantee of acceptance. All submissions must comply with regular journal and APA policies as detailed on the journal website. In addition to publication in the journal, we will create a repository of postprints with their associated materials on the Open Science Framework.