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Foreword

It was a great pleasure for me to be asked to conduct a review of the Proceedings of the 4th International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference entitled, *Society, Health and Welfare*. This conference and its resultant papers proved to be both an ambitious and timely project. As we move deeper into the 21st century these three topics (Society, Health and Welfare) are becoming more inexorably linked especially with the increasing significance of globalization and both its positive and negative consequences on the impact of our daily lives.

The articles that focused on families and their well being such as *Communication as Intergeneration Barrier; Collective Memories and Society Integration Issues in Context of Intergeneration dialogue; Intergeneration Relations in Romany Families; and The Relationships between Children and Their Grandparents and Importance of Older Generations in the Lives of Today's Families* all addressed common themes such as the need for generations to continue to share and learn from one another. Additionally, they recognized that all societies have been undergoing rapid changes in the last twenty years as a result of global changes.

In the arena of health care many significant papers in the Proceedings focused on new treatment approaches such as those found in, *The Quality of Life of Families with Children with Disability in the area of Physical well-being in Latvia; Postural Assessment for People with Severe Visual Impairment; The Assessment of Life Quality Factors by Breast Cancer Patients; Measurement of Activities and Participation for Children with Cerebral Palsy: a Systematic Review; and Early Literacy Skills in Latvian Pre-School Children with Specific Language Impairment*. These medically focused papers offer new approaches to assist in increasing the quality of life for both patients and their families. For example, the article on visually impaired clients stressed the need for increased physical activity, self awareness and motivation on the part of the visually impaired clients as well as social care center staff. Additional issues related to the quality of life were raised in the article focusing on breast cancer patients as well as the article focusing on children with cerebral palsy. In both cases researchers discovered the important need for medical and social service staff to support patients throughout the process of their diagnosis and treatment.

Additional articles in the Proceedings focus on the development and recognition of newer professions in the region. This is reflected in the articles entitled *Importance of Social Work intervention: Social and Economic Benefits; The Study of Rehabilitation Services; and The Possibilities and Limitations of Transcultural Biography Case Work: Lithuanians*. Newly developing professional groups have significant influence on future service delivery as well as later influence upon the policies that direct and inform future services. In the case of social work, the article included in this scientific conference stresses the need to refine the theory and practices of the profession and stressed the role of understanding both social and economic development related to social work clients.

These Proceedings included several articles on the field of criminal justice such as *Overall Human Values in the Context of the Institute of Criminal Procedural Compulsory Measures; Women as Sexual*

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Offenders-Reality or Myths; The Object and Subject of Evasion of Taxes and Other Compulsory Payments; The Prevention of Corruption in the Sphere of Public Purchases: The Interview with Experts; and The Role of Case Law to Ensure Judicial Power. These articles help to focus on the importance of human rights and the protection of civil liberties as well as the underreported crime of women sexual offenders or predators. Criminal justice policy is explored from the standpoint of tax evasion as well as bureaucratic corruption. These areas continue to plague developed, redeveloped and developing nations. The final article focusing on criminal justice emphasized the need for uniform court practices. Without these uniform practices, the author rightly indicates that judicial potential is underutilized and perhaps more importantly, justice is not insured.

Additional articles in the Proceedings focus on significant concerns for all societies in the 21st century, the growth of substance abusers and the increase in the number of senior citizens within society; the so called “graying” of a society. There is even an article on insomnia management for aging employees.

The final category and largest category of these Proceedings is clearly that of policy or policy-making articles. In this area, ground-breaking articles on the policy connected with medical reimbursement, social securities, information security, social and economic well-being, environmental rights, orphan pharmaceutical reimbursement, cyberspace, children’s institutions, sports referees, spirituality, brain research ensuring public safety and consumer rights protection are detailed. All of these policy articles reflect the great interest and need for social, economic and health care policy that truly benefit individuals and societies.

In conclusion, the 4th International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference entitled Society, Health and Welfare, has come at a seminal moment in policy development in Latvia as well as other Eastern European nations. The Proceedings and the research described in detail can serve as a guidepost for future researchers as well as a bench-mark for the excellent progress made in Latvia in the areas of society, health and welfare. These published proceedings are a major contribution to the literature focusing on societies in change as well as societies impacted by the forces of globalization. These Proceedings should be recommended readings for all those interested in serving and working in transitioning societies as well as those seeking to develop, implement and evaluate new social policies and their resultant social programs.

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