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Preventive Psychiatry is often associated exclusively with Social Psychiatry. Admittedly this association is not unjustified, both substantially and historically. Psychiatric prevention is basically a social psychiatry concept and without doubt social methods can be effective in the prevention of a number of psychiatric disorders. However, after modern physical treatment methods and particularly lithium salts were introduced into Psychiatry, it became clear that biological methods can be equally important in the prevention of mental illness.

Throwing light on both these general issues in psychiatric prevention was the scope of the Conference on Psychiatric Prevention organized in Athens in December 1979 by the Center for Mental Health. Psychiatric Prevention is admittedly a very wide, multidimensional area. This is reflected in the variety of approaches represented in this volume, which range from social psychiatry and psychotherapy to genetics, sleep deprivation and histochemistry. As the conference on psychiatric prevention was held in Greece papers by Greek psychiatrists were mainly presented and this explains the over-representation of reports from Greece in this book. This volume contains historical and review articles, speculations on general
issues of psychiatric prevention and original research articles. It is hoped that publication of these articles will stimulate further interest into this extremely important field of mental health.

G.N. Christodoulou, Editor