

Annual Report - United Kingdom

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Health Psychology in the UK (2014-2015)

The British Psychological Society's (BPS) Division of Health Psychology (DHP) aims to support and promote the discipline of Health Psychology, both nationally and internationally. The DHP had 1,993 members in total as of July 2015, constituting 686 full members, 1,115 general members and 192 members in-training. Membership has reduced over 2014-2015, rather than the usual increase year on year (1,601 in 2010, 1,676 in 2011, 1,947 in 2012, 2,036 in 2013 and 2,115 in 2014) and this appears to be mainly a reduction in general membership (1,224 in 2014).

The DHP committee, chaired by Sasha Cain during 2014-2015, alongside past Chair Professor Paul Bennett and Chair elect Professor Karen Rodham, has key sub-committees to help support and promote the discipline in the areas of Research, Practice, CPD (continuing professional development), Training, Publicity and Liaison, Postgraduate Affairs and Conference organization. DHP Northern Ireland (Dr Noleen McCorry), DHP Scotland (Hannah Dale), and DHP Wales (Dr Michele Gray) are also represented in their own right. Furthermore, Anna Sallis has joined the committee as the Policy officer to facilitate links between the Division and public health policy.

The Health Psychology in Public Health Network (HPPHN) has now been launched, Chaired by the Director of Public Health, Hertfordshire, Jim McManus, with myself (Dr Angel Chater) as Chair Elect, and had its first annual general meeting (AGM) in February 2016. For further details please contact

the HPPHN secretary admin@hpphn.org.uk. This network aims to bring together academics, practitioners and policy makers with an interest in applying health psychology to public health.

More information on the DHP, along with activities, events and targeted leaflets that give details about Health Psychology to the general public, employers, employees, GPs, Directors of Public Health and commissioners can be found on the website through the following link: <http://www.bps.org.uk/dhp>

Training and Professional Development in Health Psychology in the UK

Requirements for training in Health Psychology in the UK remains as a 1 year full-time (or 2 year part-time equivalent) MSc in Health Psychology, which when accredited by the BPS leads to a Stage 1 qualification in Health Psychology. This must then be followed by a period of 2 years (or part-time equivalent) supervised practice in Health Psychology which must show competency in the key areas of generic professional practice, research, teaching, consultancy and behaviour change for a trainee to be eligible to apply for Full membership of the DHP and Chartered Status with the BPS. This training provides the trainee with the Standards of Proficiency (SoPs) needed to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a legal requirement to be able to practice as a Health Psychologist in the UK. There are currently 33 accredited MSc Health Psychology (Stage 1) programmes within the UK registered on the BPS accredited programme site.

Stage 2 can be studied through either a university route, of which there are 6 accredited courses in the UK, or via an independent route, whereby the student would be independently supervised by a suitably qualified Health Psychologist to gain the competencies through a BPS agreed training plan. For this, supervisors should be registered on the RAPPS (Register of Applied Practice Psychology Supervisors), which can be found on the BPS website.

Supporting continuing professional development (CPD) portfolios in health psychology, the CPD sub-committee of the DHP, chaired by Francis Quinn is continuing to host events in the area. These are advertised through the BPS learning centre and have this year included topics such as Behaviour Change Intervention Design, Mindfulness and Health, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). This represents the increasing interest in skills relevant for the practitioner aspects of the discipline.

Many of our members including myself continue to deliver career talks around the country, with a focused session for Health Psychologists in Training at our last annual meeting. Our Twitter account is growing year on year and in July 2015 we had 3,359 followers (up from 2,824 last year). This, along with other social media, allows us to keep those interested in Health Psychology informed in DHP activity, new research, appointments and issues relevant to health psychology. Anyone can follow the DHP @divhealthpsych or join the Division of Health Psychology Community Group on Facebook where they can also post topics of interest to the group.

Health Psychology Research and Dissemination in the UK

The impact factor of the British Journal of Health Psychology has risen to 2.776, led by the current editors Professor Alison Wearden and Professor David French. The Division of Health Psychology also publishes the Health Psychology Update, which goes

out to all members of the DHP and is managed by the Publicity and Liaison Sub-committee.

The Research Sub-committee of the DHP, led by Dr Koula Asimakopoulou, has turned its focus to the collation and future promotion of REF (Research Excellence Framework) case studies that may be of interest to those aiming to submit their research to the next research assessment in 2020. The most outstanding Health Psychology MSc thesis award continues, with two well deserving winners this year. Students who have achieved the highest grade in their institution can be nominated by their course director for this award. Winners are invited to attend and present at the annual conference. The sub-committee also continues to highlight opportunities for health psychologists to represent the discipline on research funding panels to support Health Psychology research.

Health Psychology research in the UK is mainly disseminated through the DHP annual conference held from the 16th-18th September 2015 in the capital of London. Key note speakers included Professor Peter Gollwitzer & Professor Gabriele Oettingen (New York University); Professor Rob Horne (UCL School of Pharmacy; Centre for Behavioural Medicine) and Professor Lance McCracken (Kings College London). However, another noteworthy conference that covers health psychology research is the UKSBM (UK Society for Behavioural Medicine) annual conference held in Newcastle on the 8th-9th December 2015. In 2016, there will be a meeting jointly hosted by the DHP and EHPS in Aberdeen from the 23rd-27th August 2016.

Linking the EHPS with UK Health Psychology

Going forward, it would be good to create more formal links with the EHPS and the Divisions, Networks and Societies that have an interest in Health Psychology in the UK and any ideas on how to

do this are welcomed. During my time as EHPS National Delegate, I have been fortunate enough to sit on the DHP committee and now the HPPHN committee so I am able to comment on Health Psychology developments within the UK, however, this is not a formal, nor funded link. So please do contact me and let me hear your thoughts on how I can facilitate more formal relationships with those working in Health Psychology as the UK National Delegate for the EHPS.

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