

Interview with Philipp Kadel: Psychology and the One Health approach

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Philipp Kadel is a researcher and PhD student at the Department of Health Psychology and the Center for Doctoral Studies in Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Mannheim, Germany. In his research, he focuses on behaviours simultaneously beneficial for both the environment and human health, like following a meat-reduced diet. As part of his work in the Psychology Coalition at the United Nations (PCUN), he promotes the One Health approach and its role for psychological research.

• How did you come to promote One Health?

Ever since developing my PhD topic, I have always had the goal to do research on behaviours that have positive impacts on our individual health as well as our environment. Luckily, there are several of these *environment-friendly health behaviours*, like following a meat-reduced diet, or choosing active modes of transport instead of going by car. Even though I did not think of those in the context of One Health at the time, they fit very well with the idea of recognising the interconnection between humans, animals, plants, and our shared environment. By promoting behaviours with such co-benefits, we can achieve improvements of several dimensions of One Health at the same time – a thought that to me is immensely attractive and motivating.

• Why do you think that the One Health approach should gain attention?

In my opinion, we as researchers have for too long treated and investigated topics that all relate to One Health as distinct phenomena in separate research areas without a lot of exchange. Emphasising and acknowledging their interrelatedness helps us to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the underlying system. At the same time, I think that One Health can also be very valuable in communicating the importance of our findings and also the impact of our behaviours. If we can point out, for example, that the protection of our environment and endangered species is not only an idealistic endeavour but has direct implications for our own health and wellbeing, positive behaviour change might become more likely.

• What opportunities do you see for (Health) Psychology with a view to promoting One Health?

As human behaviour plays a major role in promoting One Health, Psychology as a discipline concerned with understanding, predicting, and changing behaviour has much to contribute. Health Psychology in particular has developed applicable theories and mechanisms for behaviour change. In most cases, these can be applied beyond classical health behaviours and can also be used to promote environment-friendly behaviours or, as mentioned before, environment-friendly health behaviours that have co-benefits for several aspects of One

Health at the same time. In my opinion, these behaviours could become even more prominent in Health Psychological Research.

• **How could the EHPS contribute to promoting One Health?**

As I was lucky enough to experience, there are many exceptional researchers at all career levels within the EHPS that are passionate about topics related to One Health. Fortunately, the EHPS provides a possibility for those people to come together and exchange insights and ideas. The work of the Special Interest Group "Equity, Global Health and Sustainability" also greatly contributes to promoting a holistic perspective on health within the EHPS. Over the last years, there have been several presentations and roundtables at the annual EHPS conference related to the topic of One Health. If it could become the topic of a future Summer School, for example, or if One Health could even become its own track, I think that would be fantastic.

• **As part of your work in the Psychology Coalition at the United Nations (PCUN), you and other PCUN members have published several statements on psychological perspectives on One Health. Can you give a short summary of these statements?**

We, the author team, are convinced that *building back better* after the pandemic and ensuring the wellbeing of all life forms requires a holistic perspective on health that acknowledges the interconnectedness between humans, animals, and our environment. Additionally, we emphasise that achieving One Health is also a matter of global justice. The contributions to climate change and environmental degradation and their negative consequences are unequally distributed across the globe. As Psychologists, we aimed to point out the

importance of human behaviour in promoting One Health. From Mitigation Behaviours to Adaptation Behaviours, our own doing plays a major role in shaping the future of the planet and our species. Psychological science has a lot to contribute when developing interventions and policies. We outline different theories and mechanisms of behaviour change and derive recommendations for UN agencies, governments, NGOs, the private sector, and the civil society to ensure a healthy planet with healthy people.

• **What were your (PCUN's) reasons for publishing statements on One Health?**

Our main goal was to emphasise the potential of psychological research in the promotion of One Health. Psychology might not be the first discipline that comes to a policy maker's mind when thinking about One Health, but as a discipline investigating human behaviour, we have a lot to bring to the table. This needs to be made known.

• **What recommendations do you give in the statements that could be adopted by researchers?**

Our recommendations, ten in total, mainly addressed actors outside of academia, like governments, NGOs, and the private sector. For example, we emphasise the need to develop communication strategies that point out the interdependence of human, animal, and environmental health with the goal of developing a shared identity and collective efficacy in achieving One Health. Specific and vivid narratives should be used in public campaigns. Psychologists should be included in the development of actionable policies and practices. We also propose that interventions should be targeted to specific audiences and populations to maximise the benefits for One Health.

• You also presented the One Health approach at the side event “Recalibrating & Rethinking Sustainable Future: The Importance of Health, Wellbeing & Empathy” of the ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council of the UN) Youth Forum, which was co-sponsored by the EHPS. What were your experiences with presenting One Health to such a diverse audience?

I am always happy to exchange ideas and thoughts with people from different disciplines and backgrounds. I think it is very valuable for Health Psychology to spread our research as widely as possible and equally valuable to learn about insights from other disciplines. This is especially true in the context of One Health, which by definition is a transdisciplinary approach. What I liked about the event was that it was not solely academic but also included speakers with a lot of practical experience in promoting health and wellbeing in various ways.

• What discussions related to One Health were raised during the event?

One aspect that came up during the event was the global justice aspect of One Health. As mentioned before, the contributions to and negative consequences suffered from climate change, for example, are unequally distributed between regions and countries. Globally, more greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the people in the top 1 % of the income distribution than by the lower 50 %. However, the negative consequences of climate change and environmental degradation are mainly suffered by poorer people and regions. Interventions aiming to promote One Health, therefore, need to be tailored to different populations and audiences. While some might contribute most to One Health by promoting Adaptation Behaviours, others could achieve most by focusing on Mitigation Behaviours.

• What did you take away from the event regarding One Health and developing a sustainable future?

As the event was so diverse and multidisciplinary, I think one of my main takeaways was the certainty that we will only succeed in promoting One Health if many people from all regions, disciplines and backgrounds each contribute their part. No single scientific, political or societal actor will be able to achieve this alone. On the flip side, this also means that everyone can contribute something to promoting One Health.

• There are also other, related concepts to One Health, for example Planetary Health. Are these mainly different names for the same concept, or are there differences?

I think what is most important is that all these disciplines have similar goals, namely, to promote the health of humans, other lifeforms, and our environment. You find differences in the definitions of One Health, Planetary Health or Holistic Health which partially might be due to their respective origins. As long as we keep communicating and cooperate in achieving the overarching goal, I think the label is secondary.

• What are your plans for promoting One Health in future? Which obstacles might have to be overcome?

I will certainly try to conduct research that can help us in promoting One Health. Thereby, I also aim to bring the topic into the focus of fellow researchers. Additionally, I am a big believer in bringing our research and insights to a wider audience. Therefore, I am always happy to give talks or write statements for an audience outside and inside of academia. A big challenge in achieving One Health is certainly that it requires

many different actors to work together for a common goal but then again, every small contribution counts.

• **To conclude, what would you like readers to take away?**

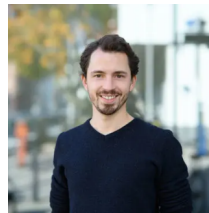
I think we as health psychologists and everyone else interested in promoting people's wellbeing can only profit from broadening our understanding of health as a concept and acknowledging the interrelation of our own health with the health of fellow lifeforms and our environment. This can also mean bringing new behaviours into the focus of our research and interventions. Secondly, as stated before, I think that we as Psychologists have a lot to contribute when it comes to promoting One Health. We do have a lot to bring to the table – and we should.



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