

EHPS 2023: A conference that transforms.

EHPS Grant report

Anna Hakobjanyan Dear European Health Psychology Society and all readers, I am happy to share my experience of the first in-person participation in the EHPS 2023 conference.

Yerevan State University, Armenia

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude and admiration to all of the EHPS wonderful membership for the best conference organization. I was lucky to receive a grant this year to be able to attend the conference and it really was an experience of high importance. The core theme of EHPS 37th Annual Conference was “Health Psychology for all: Equity, Inclusiveness and Transformation” and apart from all the scientific up to date information and the communication, the conference was transformative indeed, for me personally. As a researcher and as a member of European Health Psychology Society I could feel the power of being a part of the community, inclusiveness and integration. This was a golden opportunity to see how open and supportive the EHPS network is.

I would like to mention some key points which were crucial in my experience. One of the biggest influential events were the keynote lectures. All of the keynote lectures were, first of all, full of innovative ideas and of course an inspiring speech, which enabled new ideas and perspectives in health psychology research and methodology. I enjoyed every single day of the conference and would like to point out the symposiums and oral sessions as well. All of the symposiums I attended were the exact scientific environment that fosters new ideas: the IAAP Health Psychology division symposium: “Scalable health behaviour change interventions

and their mechanisms”; “Women’s health issues across the lifespan: identifying risks and opportunities for change”; “Psychological health and well-being: insights from behavioural and molecular genetics”; “How does stress relate to eating behaviour? Insights from studies in daily life”; “Nutrition education across educational settings to promote healthy and sustainable diets along the life course”, “Using the smartphone as a naturalistic assessment tool: Social interactions, health and well-being”. And of course, the oral sessions filled the room with significant researchers and involved debates and discussions. The only thing I could regret is that all the symposiums and oral sessions were going parallelly and I had to choose between them. I managed to attend those oral sessions which presented the most interest and importance for me in terms of my future research plans. Especially I would like to mention these sessions: “Motivational processes in health behaviour”; “Habits and physical activity”; “Individual, environmental and policy approaches to dietary behaviours”; “Promoting health in adolescence”. Abovementioned symposiums and oral sessions gave opportunities to enhance my research skills and move forward in my scientific interests in health psychology.

I would like to specially mention my unique chance of meeting Professor Dr. Jennifer Inauen, Head of the Department of Health Psychology & Behavioral Medicine at the University of Bern. Meeting Professor Inauen in person was one of the most important events in my experience. I had opportunities before to contact Professor Inauen remotely but the meeting at EHPS conference enabled a productive discussion and brief

consultation with the Professor which brought me to new significant ideas in the designing and development of a behavior change intervention model. Probably, the most important outcome for me is that further steps of my future research are outlined after contacting Professor Inauen.

It was a really nice and worthwhile experience to present my research as a poster in such an established conference as EHPS annual conference is. I was presenting a poster: "Subjective well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic: the predictive role of Covid-related adaptive behavior" with the research results of two cross-sectional studies conducted in Armenia during the first wave of the Pandemic in 2020 and two years later in 2022. The main conclusion based on the results of two studies is that helping behavior was revealed as a significant predictor for subjective well-being and overcoming of crisis situations like Covid-19. I was happy to answer the questions and receive positive feedback. Also, it was a new experience for me the format of chaired poster presentations, which was very efficient.

Last, but not least, my experience wouldn't be so positive and full of novel ideas, if there wasn't such a perfect organized conference and an excellent technical support to ensure the smooth running of the conference. So, let me express my gratitude one more time to all of people who were part of the organizational works.

I am greatly thankful to EHPS Grants Committee for funding and this opportunity of unforgettable journey. Attendance in EHPS 2023 was my first and tremendous experience indeed, but I am sure it is not the last one and I will attend many more conferences and share my experience with this amazing network.

Sincerely yours,
Anna Hakobjanyan

**Anna Hakobjanyan**

Yerevan State University, Armenia

a_hakobjanyan@ysu.am,hakobjanyan.anna@gmail.com