

EDITORIAL

From Groningen to Pafos: Ideas and reflections from one conference inspiring the next

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Abstract

This editorial introduces the second regular issue of The European Health Psychologist in 2026, published just ahead of the 40th Annual EHPS Conference in Pafos. Drawing inspiration from the 2025 conference in Groningen while looking forward to this year's meeting, the issue brings together contributions exploring patient–provider communication, open science infrastructure, experiences of conference participation, and opportunities for early career researchers. Reflections from grant recipients and an online attendee offer complementary perspectives on the scientific, social, and inclusive dimensions of EHPS conferences, while practical advice on navigating conference programmes, networking, and social activities helps readers prepare for Pafos. The issue also previews CREATE activities planned for 2026. As EHPS celebrates four decades of annual conferences, we reflect on this year's theme, “Digital Innovations in Health: Harnessing the Power of Technology and AI,” and the opportunities and challenges emerging technologies bring to health psychology, inviting these conversations to continue beyond Pafos and into future EHP contributions.

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And just like that, we are again at the most expected annual event: the European Health Psychology Society (EHPS) conference! Bags have been unpacked, presentations are being delivered, and many of us are probably still trying to work out how exactly to fit all those interesting sessions into one conference programme.

As we gather in Pafos for the 40th Annual Conference of the EHPS, we have a new issue out to keep you company between sessions, over a coffee, or whenever you find a quiet moment to recharge. And what better way to prepare for the next EHPS conference than by revisiting some of the ideas, discussions, and experiences that emerged from the last one?

We begin with **Ellen Smets**, one of the keynote speakers at EHPS 2025, who takes us inside the “anatomy” of patient–provider communication, reflecting on its complexities, its human foundations, and how emerging digital technologies may reshape clinical interactions.

From communication, we move to another conversation started in Groningen. **Emma Norris and colleagues** revisit their 2025 roundtable on open science infrastructure, moving beyond why Open Science matters to the rather more difficult question of how we actually make open infrastructure possible, easy, normative, rewarding and, eventually, required.

Madeleine Warmer and fellow EHPS 2025 grant recipients offer a collective reflection about the conference in Groningen, capturing the scientific learning, networking, professional development and sense of community that shaped their conference experience as early career researchers.

And what if you cannot actually be there in person? **Leona Ryan** takes us to the other side of the screen, describing how she went from reluctant virtual attendee (with understandable post-pandemic “Zoom fatigue”) to feeling genuinely part of the conference, while raising broader questions about accessibility, sustainability and inclusion.

For those who *will* be joining us in Pafos, **Yil Engbersen-Severijns and Ciska Hoving** provide some timely advice in *Abstracts and Afterparties: Surviving the EHPS conference in the best way possible*. From choosing sessions and navigating networking to knowing when to join the afterparty, and when your brain simply needs a break, they remind us that making the most of a conference does not necessarily mean trying to be everywhere at once. As they put it: be strategic, not omnipresent.

Finally, **Theresa Frohn and colleagues** bring us fully into 2026 with the latest from CREATE, including their activities throughout the year and what awaits early career researchers here in Pafos: an AI-focused pre-conference workshop, “Meet the Experts”, and the Early Career Researcher Spotlight Talks.

Together, these contributions offer a chance to revisit what we learned in Groningen, reflect on how we experience conferences and the communities built around them, and and perhaps inspire how we make the most of our time together here in Pafos.

And this year we have an extra reason to be excited: we are celebrating the Society's 40th Annual Conference. Four decades of conferences have accompanied enormous changes in health psychology. From the questions we ask and the methods we use to, increasingly, the technologies through which we research, intervene, communicate, and connect. It therefore feels particularly fitting that this year's theme, “*Digital Innovations in Health: Harnessing the Power of Technology and AI*,” invites us to explore both the extraordinary opportunities these developments bring for practice and research and the questions they raise around accessibility, equity, ethics, transparency, sustainability and human connection. Forty conferences later, perhaps that is exactly where we should be: celebrating how far our field has come while remaining curious and critical about where it is going next.

We hope some of those reflections, debates, and new ideas emerging here in Pafos will continue long after the conference ends - and perhaps even find their way into future issues of *The European Health Psychologist* (we are open for submissions!). So,

whether you are between sessions, preparing for your presentation, deciding what to attend next, or simply taking a well-deserved break, consider this issue a little extra conference inspiration and our invitation to keep the conversation going afterwards.

Enjoy the conference—and see you around Pafos!



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