

report from the EC

EHPS 2013 Conference Evaluation

Delegate Feedback on the 2013 EHPS Conference, Bordeaux, France

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The 2013 EHPS Conference took place in Bordeaux (16-20 July 2013) and was attended by 771 delegates. An online conference evaluation survey was sent to all delegates, of whom 225 (29%) completed the survey.

Of the delegates who completed the survey, the highest numbers were from the UK (n=38), The Netherlands (n=24) and Germany (n=21), which broadly reflects the profile of EHPS members and conference delegates. For 35% of respondents, this was their first conference, although a similar number of respondents had attended at least 3 EHPS conference in the past 5 years (44%).

Scientific Programme

As shown in Table 1, respondents' overall ratings of the scientific programme were broadly positive, with all aspects of the conference programmes receiving mean ratings above the scale mid-point. These ratings were reflected in delegates' comments on the conference.

"The programme was one of the best I have ever seen at a conference. I was reluctant to miss anything!"

In terms of the balance of sessions in the scientific programme, the vast majority of respondents (>80%) were happy with the numbers of symposia, workshops, keynotes and oral presentations. However, 16% thought that there were too many oral presentations. This may have been due to the decision to include 9

parallel sessions on some days of the conference to accommodate a greater number of oral presentations. The large number of parallel sessions was commented on by some delegates.

"Too many interesting presentations at the same moment – difficult to choose!"

"Similar topics should not be at the same time slot"

In addition, 34% of respondents felt that there were too many poster presentations. Many delegates commented that they liked the interactive poster sessions, but that they could be improved. In particular, having fewer posters, ensuring that presenters and chairs attend, and moving the poster sessions to a different time of day would help to increase engagement.

"I like this [poster presentations] idea and I have seen it work well at the DHP BPS conference. However, it seemed slightly disorganised at EHPS (i.e., was at the wrong time of day to maximise audience and often chairs and presenters did not

Table 1. Scientific Programme – Overall Ratings (1=Poor to 5=Excellent)

	M	SD
Overall quality	3.69	0.87
Keynotes	3.66	0.93
Symposia	3.96	0.87
Oral presentations	3.85	0.77
Roundtables/debates	3.75	0.85
Chairing	3.95	0.88
Conference workshops	4.08	0.95
Poster presentations	3.73	0.85

turn up to their sessions)."

"I would like the poster session to be at another time. After keynote many participants are too exhausted to actually participate in the poster presentation."

Delegates were asked whether they would prefer to have poster sessions with short presentations, without short presentations, or with a mixture of posters with and without presentations. Almost half of respondents (45%) indicated that they would prefer poster sessions with short presentations. A further 28% indicated that they would prefer a mixture of posters with and without presentations. Only 15% indicated that they would prefer not to have any presentations, with 12% undecided.

"I think that chaired poster sessions with short presentation facilitate discussion and exchange between the presenter and audience and add to their value as a conference contribution."

Respondents' ratings of specific aspects of the scientific programme were generally positive (Table 3), although respondents felt that the programme was slightly less successful as regards to including papers that were relevant to clinical practice and addressed issues relevant to a health psychologist's work.

The majority of respondents (54%) reported that they had accessed the online abstracts

before the conference, although only 18% reporting accessing the online abstracts during the conference. Most of the comments on the abstract book were positive although a minority of delegates indicated that they would prefer to have a paper version at the conference. In addition, some delegates commented that they were unaware how to access the abstracts in advance and that the lack of internet access at the conference venue prevented them from accessing the online abstracts during the conference.

"I preferred having hard copy given at the conference but understand why not"

"Much better than a printed abstract book. Easy to access in advance of the conference."

"It was unclear how to access abstracts in advance. Helpful to have a reminder email before the conference about this."

"Because of internet availability (or lack thereof) it would've been nice to have a hardcopy of the abstracts."

Other Aspects of the Conference

Respondents' ratings of various aspects of the conference were broadly positive (Table 4).

Table 3. Aspects of the Scientific Programme (1=Poor to 5=Excellent)

	M	SD
Good quality research	3.97	0.81
Range of theoretical approaches	3.99	0.80
Theory-based interventions	4.00	0.77
New/yet to be published research	4.00	0.81
Range of methods	3.98	0.79
Relevant to clinical practice	3.77	0.85
Relevant a health psychologist's work	3.82	0.84

Table 2. Balance of Sessions in the Scientific Programme

	Too Few	Fine	Too Many
Symposia	7%	90%	3%
Workshops	10%	90%	0%
Keynotes	10%	82%	8%
Oral presentations	3%	81%	16%
Poster presentations	2%	64%	34%
Poster presentations	2%	64%	34%

Respondents gave high ratings for the overall time schedule of the conference as well opportunities to meet and talk with colleagues. Other aspects of the conference such as the venue and the social programme received lower, but still positive, ratings. These ratings were also reflected in delegates' comments. In particular, respondents were very critical of the suitability of the conference venue, particularly in relation to the lack of air-conditioning in the lecture rooms, which detracted from their engagement with, and enjoyment of, the conference.

"If the conference is going to take place in a hot country then I think it is very important to choose a venue that has air conditioning, otherwise it becomes very difficult for people to remain focussed and you notice that people are less inclined to attend all sessions."

"After the first keynote, in which I nearly fainted, I didn't attend any others. I also ended up picking talks to see partly based on how hot the room was likely to be. If future conferences are held in locations with similarly high average temperatures, the venue needs to have climate control."

"Venue - there was no air conditioning, which made it impossible to attend many of the talks (including the keynote sessions)."

This year the conference dinner took place on the Thursday evening (rather than the

Table 4. *Aspects of the Conference (1=Poor to 5=Excellent)*

	M	SD
Overall time schedule	3.85	0.92
Venue	3.07	1.26
Social programme	3.27	1.16
Opportunities to meet colleagues	4.17	0.84
Value for money	3.30	1.05

normal Friday slot). Delegates were asked for their preference. There was an even split between preferring Thursday (23%) and Friday (23%) with a further 34% indicating no preference. The conference dinner attracted many positive comments, but some delegates also commented on the lack of a vegetarian option.

"Fantastic conference dinner."

"The venue was brilliant."

"Conference dinner was good (unless you were a vegetarian)."

"Vegetarian meals were not provided for the dinner even for people who had registered as vegetarian."

Planning for Future Conferences

Looking forward, there are four key issues that the EC will need to consider when planning future conferences.

1. When organising conferences for mid-summer, the suitability of the conference venue will need special attention, especially in relation to the provision of air-conditioning.

2. Future Scientific Committees will need to look at ways to limit the number of posters, to make the sessions more manageable. In addition, the timing of the poster sessions may need to be reconsidered to increase participation.

3. Accessibility to the online abstracts needs to be improved by (i) making the link to the online abstracts more explicit before the conference and (ii) ensuring that the conference venue has adequate wi-fi to delegates to access the online abstracts during the conference.

4. The provision of appropriate vegetarian food at the conference dinner (and throughout the conference) needs to be ensured.

Final Comment

Overall, respondents' ratings of, and comments on, the conference were less positive than for recent conferences. This was mainly due to the high temperatures in Bordeaux at the time of the conference and the lack of air conditioning in the conference venue. Nonetheless, many delegates commented that the quality of the scientific conference was very high and that the social events were enjoyable. We are indebted to the hard work of the Conference President, Bruno Quintard, and the Chair of the Scientific Committee, Holger Schmid, for ensuring the success of the conference.

"Well done to the organizing team, very enjoyable conference! However, air conditioning and working wi-fi were sorely needed."

Thank you to all delegates who completed the conference evaluation survey - your comments and suggestions are very helpful and will help to shape the structure of future EHPS conferences.



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