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Health Psychologist**

Bulletin of the European Health Psychology Society

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# May 2022 Editorial

## Angela Rodrigues

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## Pamela Rackow

*University of Stirling, UK*

Our third issue of 2022 includes a reflection from grant winners on the 2021 EHPS conference. This issue also includes an article on the upcoming CREATE Workshop 2022.

A brief overview of the articles included in this issue can be found below.

Claire Reidy and colleagues provide a brief overview of CREATE and the committee, and introduce the upcoming CREATE workshop. This year's workshop will focus on the use of digital tools and technology-driven approaches.

In the four reports presented, grant winners (Fadil Azim; Aulbach; Wren; Lysakova) reflect on attending the 2021 Conference of the European Health Psychology Society and provide an account of key take home messages.

Hope you enjoy reading this issue!  
Angela Rodrigues & Pamela Rackow



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# Are you an early career researcher?

## The CREATE network can support you!

### Claire Reidy

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### Maya Braun

*Ghent University, Belgium*

### Maria Blöchl

*Leipzig University, Germany*

### Louise Foley

*National University of Ireland, Ireland*

### Nikolett Warner

*National University of Ireland, Ireland*

### Daniella Watson

*University of Southampton, UK*

The EHPS early career researcher (ECR) subdivision, *Collaborative Research And Training in the EHPS* (CREATE) is a network which aims to connect and support European and international researchers from the start of their academic careers, through to further progression.

In the past two years, the COVID pandemic has made it more challenging to connect ECRs in health psychology and pursue our goals. Despite the challenges and although some planned events had to be cancelled, the CREATE committee quickly adapted. Last year, for the very first time, we were happy to hold a virtual CREATE workshop at the EHPS online conference in 2021 (Braun & Lerch, 2021). Although the digitalisation of events brought advantages that we plan to harness in the future, we are nevertheless happy that we will also be able to re-connect in-person again this year. We are excited to announce our plans and opportunities for the next few months in this article. We would also like to use the opportunity to (re-)introduce ourselves and to reach and connect with as many (new) ECRs in health psychology as possible.

### Who are we?

CREATE is a network of and for health psychology ECRs that offers a range of networking and learning opportunities. These activities are organised by an elected CREATE executive committee, which consists of six members. Over the last year, The CREATE Executive Committee, has acquired two marvellous new committee members: Maya Braun (Ghent University, Belgium) as Webmaster and Nikolett Warner (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland) as Secretary. They joined;

-Chairperson, Claire Reidy (University of Oxford, UK),

-Treasurer, Louise Foley (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland),

-Application Manager and Communications Officer, Maria Blöchl (Leipzig University, Germany), and,

-Grant Master and Liaison Officer, Daniella Watson (University of Southampton, UK).

For details of the Executive Committee and their roles: <https://ehps.net/organisers-contact-us/>.

### What do we do?

To support ECRs in health psychology research and foster international relationships and collaborations, we organise a range of training and networking opportunities for CREATE members. Throughout the year we connect ECRs and share opportunities via social media, and during the annual EHPS conference, these opportunities come



**Image 1: The CREATE Executive Committee**

in the form of a **pre-conference CREATE workshop**, and **'Meet the Expert'** sessions with the conference keynote speakers. As of 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we also organised additional **webinars** to support and share knowledge between CREATE members in a virtual space. We intend to continue with these virtual opportunities for ECRs to communicate, network, and learn.

## Our annual CREATE workshop

The CREATE committee organises an interactive 2-day workshop each year immediately prior to the annual EHPS conference. These workshops are led by experts within the field of health psychology, providing opportunities and support to enhance knowledge and skills. But they also provide an important opportunity to get to know and connect with your peers. Topics vary every year, and are chosen through discussions with fellow ECRs.

The CREATE workshop also offers great opportunities for networking, including a CREATE dinner, a city tour, and activities spread

throughout the workshop.

Last summer, for the first time, we conducted an online workshop (in place of a face-to-face meeting) with some incredible speakers on *'How to get your research out there: publishing, promoting, and funding your research'* ([https://ehps.net/create-online-2021/?et\\_fb=1&PageSpeed=off](https://ehps.net/create-online-2021/?et_fb=1&PageSpeed=off)), which was a fantastic success!

This year, after initially attempting to undertake this workshop at the postponed EHPS 2020 annual conference, we are finally able to announce an exciting face-to-face workshop on *'Digitalising Health Psychology research to enhance our science: Opening the doors to innovative measurement, design and intervention approaches'*. The workshop will be facilitated by Dr Felix Naughton (University of East Anglia, UK) (<https://research-portal.uea.ac.uk/en/persons/felix-naughton>), and Dr Olga Perski (University College London, UK) (<https://www.olgaperski.com/>). The workshop will take place on Mon 22nd and Tue 23rd of August 2022, with an additional (optional, but desirable) social networking activity on Sun 21st of August.

This workshop will be focused on the use of digital tools and technology-driven approaches to

## Digitalising Health Psychology Research to enhance our science:

opening the doors to innovative measurement, design and intervention approaches



collaborative research  
and training in the ehps

**CREATE**  
Early Career Researcher  
Pre-Conference Workshop

**Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**  
**Tue 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2022**

Workshop fee: €120 (€95 if eligible for reduced fee)  
For more info and registration: [www.ehps.net/create](http://www.ehps.net/create)  
or [2022.ehps.net/create](http://2022.ehps.net/create)

sessions delivered by

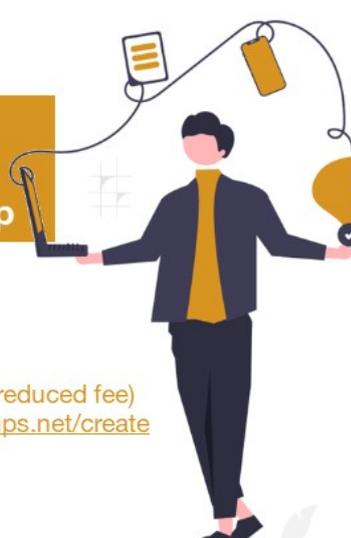


**Dr. Olga Perski**  
University College London



**Dr. Felix Naughton**  
University of East Anglia

CREATE is a subdivision of the European Health Psychology Society, promoting education and collaboration for early career researchers in the field.  
The workshop takes place immediately prior to the annual EHPS conference



**Image 2: CREATE Workshop 2022**

enable researchers to better capture, assess, evaluate and intervene on psychological and behavioural phenomena related to health.

The deadline for applications for this year's workshop is May 27th, 2022 (full registration fee: €120; reduced fee for eligible countries: €95; check whether you are eligible for the reduced fee here: <https://ehps.net/fees/> ). For more information on current and past CREATE workshops, check our website - <https://ehps.net/workshops/>. You can also hear more about this workshop and our fantastic workshop facilitators through our Twitter account - @EHPSCreators.

## Funding

CREATE also offers funding opportunities for the CREATE workshop registration, EHPS conference registration, accommodation and travel. Find out more about eligibility and the selection process here: <https://ehps.net/grants/>. This year CREATE prioritised grant applicants from Ukraine, although the closing date for grant applications has now closed.

## Meet the Expert sessions 2022– apply July 2022!

We also organise group sessions during the EHPS

# MEET THE experts

at the EHPS2022 conference  
in Bratislava





**Urte Scholz**  
PROFESSOR OF APPLIED SOCIAL AND HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY, ZÜRICH (SWITZERLAND)

- Social and dyadic processes for health behavior and well-being
- Intrapersonal associations in behavior change
- Temporal dynamics
- Development of theory-based interventions for health-behavior change
- Postgraduate training in health psychology and research practice transfer



**Susan A. Murphy**  
PROFESSOR OF STATISTICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE, HARVARD (USA)

- Developing data analytic algorithms and methods for improving personalization in digital intervention development
- Just-in-Time Adaptive Interventions
- Experimental study designs for use in optimizing digital interventions
- Enhancing interdisciplinary collaborations



**Falko Sniehotta**  
PROFESSOR OF HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY & BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE, NEWCASTLE (UK) AND TWENTE (NETHERLANDS)

- Understanding behaviour change
- Policy research and intervention science
- Theory in health psychology
- Addressing inequalities



**Zuzana Dankulinová**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, KOSICE (SLOVAKIA)

- mental health in adolescence
- adverse experiences, stress and coping strategies in adolescence
- improvement of child and adolescent mental health care services
- mixed-methods and participatory approach in research
- work-life balance for women in science

For more info and registration: [www.ehps.net/create](http://www.ehps.net/create) or [2022.ehps.net/create](http://2022.ehps.net/create)

**Image 3: CREATE's 'Meet the Expert' sessions at EHPS 2022**

annual conference with each of the keynote speakers. These sessions are a rare opportunity for a group of ECRs to meet, discuss, and network with a senior researcher in health psychology in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. This year we are fortunate to have group ECR sessions with the conference keynote speakers Professor Susan Murphy (Harvard University), Professor Falko Sniehotta (Heidelberg University, Germany), Dr Zuzana Dankulinová (University in Kosice, Slovakia) or Professor Urte Scholz (University of Zurich, Switzerland). They are looking forward to discuss a wide range of fascinating topics with ECRs

**Keep an eye on our Twitter page or on our webpage for the opening of applications for these sessions!**

## Participating in CREATE activities

The activities of the CREATE network are open to all ECRs working in the field of health psychology. To attend the workshops or webinars organised by CREATE, you are required to become EHPS Members (<https://www.easyconferences.org/ehps/> subscribe). For more information about what activities we are running, and how to take part, check out our website here <https://ehps.net/about-us/>.

To keep informed about the latest CREATE activities, follow us on Twitter @EHPSCreators and on Facebook @CreateEhps.

To join the CREATE mailing list, please subscribe via <https://ehps.net/network/>.

We look forward to connecting with you soon.

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# Widening worldviews and networks: EHPS Grant Report 2021

**Darlina H. Fadil Azim**

*Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland*

It took three attempts before I finally made it to an EHPS conference. I started my PhD in the Spring of 2019 and was excited to attend the EHPS conference that year. As a clinical psychologist from Malaysia, I was not too familiar with EHPS. Since my PhD research was going to be primarily on health psychology, my supervisor, Dr Karen Morgan (Perdana University - Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, PURCSI, Malaysia), suggested that I attend the conference. I was informed that the conference would be a great opportunity to meet and learn from the authors whose names I have only been able to see on the many articles I have read on health psychology. I was sold. I submitted an abstract on a research I did prior to my PhD, and also applied for a travel grant from EHPS. I was making plans to make my way all the way from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to Dubrovnik, Croatia. However, as the date grew closer, I was offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go for my Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. It was an offer I could not refuse. Reluctantly, I had to cancel my plans for the conference. I consoled myself by thinking there is always next year.

By the end of 2019 I already had some data available from my PhD research and submitted an abstract for EHPS 2020. Again, I was excited to be making plans to go to Bratislava, Slovakia. However, it was not to be. Covid came and made it impossible for the conference to proceed in 2020.

Come 2021, I finally made it to an EHPS conference, and it was all and more that I had

hoped for, despite the restrictions we had with Covid-19. With the conference being online, it gave me the opportunity to pick and choose the presentations and attend as many sessions as possible. I attended the CREATE Early Career Researcher Workshop first which was a real eye-opener for me. It was during Dr Marita Hennessy's (University College Cork, Ireland) session on how to use social media for research and networking that I realized that I have been missing out on Twitter. I was very surprised to see how extensive Twitter is utilized among the research community in Europe. Where I am from, Twitter is mainly used for issues on political or current affairs. Research postings are usually on Facebook and to a certain extent, LinkedIn. I finally made my Twitter account public and started following fellow EHPS participants and EHPS accounts. My worldview expanded. I now had access to an abundance of PhD tips and tricks, notifications of the latest publications especially on digital health, and could access the latest articles too. My PhD journey no longer felt so lonely anymore.

The conference also gave me the opportunity to present the preliminary results of my PhD research on "The impact of the Naluri app on depression, anxiety and quality of life among cardiac patients". The results showed that patients in the treatment group reported improved scores for all three aspects, however the engagement on the app was not included in the analysis yet. This was brought up and discussed in the Q&A session. All the feedback I received as well as the other presentations on digital health during the conference provided me with relevant and useful

ideas on how to further improve my own research.

Another presentation that really caught my attention and interest was the photo elicitation study on “What does it mean to choose health?” (Palacz-Poborczyk, 2021). The use of photos or images instead of interviews to obtain insights from participants is an alternative approach in qualitative study. It allows the participants to express themselves through pictures and further enhances the richness of the data that can be obtained. It made me think of other relevant research questions that can be explored using this research method.

Apart from the knowledge gained, I also got acquainted with fellow national editors of the Practical Health Psychology (PHP). It was lovely to meet everyone with our matching PHP t-shirts. We shared and discussed ideas on how to further expand the PHP Blog’s reach to the community and also how to translate our research from technical to more layman terms in order to make it more relatable for the public.

My deepest appreciation to the EHPS Executive Committee, Grants Committee for awarding me this grant which made it possible for me to learn, share and expand my knowledge and network especially among early career researchers. Here’s hoping that I do not have to wait for another three years to attend another EHPS conference!

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# Out of health psychology and back again

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2020: the Covid-19 pandemic strikes mankind. A German PhD student is stranded in his kitchen in Helsinki, Finland, where he finds himself with one mission – finish his PhD thesis. With the support of his supervisors who bring him office equipment and good advice, he struggles through. A thesis is born. All it awaits is being defended and – perhaps more importantly – its final study to be presented to an international audience. But lo!, the time for the EHPS conference comes close and the pandemic still holds its grip on the world.

2021: the PhD student has evolved into a Postdoc. Changed fields. Works in a project on intergroup relations now. The 2021 EHPS conference approaches. Does he still have enough health psychology in him to attend? Thanks to a slow and effortful publication process the final study of his PhD is still unpublished and therefore eligible to be presented at EHPS. He applies, he applies for a grant. He gets it! He attends and, yet again, marvels at the world of European health psychology.

After this somewhat dramatized prelude, I can honestly say that the EHPS conference grant was my only way to attend the 2021 EHPS annual meeting. In the beginning of 2021, I had taken up a postdoctoral position in a project on intergroup relations which would not pay for a health psychology conference, no matter how great and prestigious it may be.

So there I was with the final study of my PhD, in which I had examined usage patterns for a mobile app. In the app, participants learned to

withhold their impulses to react to unhealthy food images in an attempt to decrease their unhealthy snack consumption. Following Jun.-Prof. Laura König's invitation to join the symposium "The potential of digital technologies for understanding and changing eating behavior" she had organized, I had the great pleasure to present my work alongside Stuart Ferguson (University of Tasmania), Michael Kilb (University of Mannheim), and Laura herself (University of Bayreuth). Daniel Powell (University of Aberdeen) gave us the honor to discuss our work. The audience got to hear and discuss about fascinating research from comfort eating to healthy colorful meals, from improving communication in online support groups to food impulse training. It became clear yet again to everyone that digital technologies have great potential to further our understanding of and to intervene on eating behavior but that user engagement is key to both observational and intervention studies.

I also had plenty of opportunity to attend other sessions. This way I learned more about TV viewing and dietary intake, using nudges in all kinds of different settings and for all kinds of different behaviors, about habits for hygiene behavior, physical behavior, and sleep routines, and how health psychology and environmental psychology can go hand in hand and learn from each other. All of these talks and ideas presented great work and really stimulated my thinking, exactly what I hoped for when signing up for the conference.

Hearing talks was not just possible live, but, since most presentations were pre-recorded, they could also be watched afterwards on the easyconferences platform. This was a great

advantage of the online conference format compared to a face-to-face one (in addition to environmental aspects and being more inclusive for parents or people with disabilities). Of course, there are also downsides that made painfully clear what we're missing out on in these times of no face-to-face contact: not only are networking opportunities much rarer and interactions happen less spontaneously. I personally found rather striking how important the change of scenery is that comes with a "normal" conference visit. I never made it to any of the social events that took place in the evening on specialized platforms. Not because I did not care or was not interested (and I heard people had good fun on those occasions). It was just that my regular day-to-day life kept happening around me and kept me busy. So despite the overall very positive experience of this online conference I have to say: I'm looking forward to the next EHPS meeting to hopefully be face-to-face again.

For my final words about something close to my heart I need to go back to the beginning of the conference. While the opening ceremony is usually not my favorite part of the conference (sorry!) it was special to me this year. Ari Haukkala, who supervised my PhD and was a great mentor and guide in my academic life, passed away in February 2021. In this year's opening ceremony, the EHPS announced the introduction of a new mentoring scheme that will be named after him. From all my personal experience with Ari I can definitely say that I cannot imagine any better way to honor his memory as a great mentor and teacher – these were the things he was most passionate about and he was always vocal about the pride he felt for his students' success. Without the EHPS's conference grant I would not have been able to attend the opening ceremony to hear this announcement first hand. For this I am very grateful.

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# EHPS Grant Report

## Georgina H. Wren

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Last year I was fortunate enough to be awarded the 2021 EHPS Conference Grant which allowed me not only to attend as both a presenter, and as an audience member, but also to network, learn and participate at an excellent international conference. This year presented the challenge of online attendance, which allowed me to attend a range of talks without even leaving the office! As a Masters student, moving into a PhD, this was an eye-opening opportunity to engage with presentations related to my current and upcoming research areas, and to enjoy the workshops and lab series to develop my skills as a researcher.

My approach to this conference was two-fold: a) to disseminate and discuss aspects of my own research, and the field of women's reproductive health more generally, and b) to learn how to incorporate Health Psychology into my current PhD research which has a more clinical focus. The week started by attending a presentation, exploring the physical and psychological impact of pain relating to endometriosis (Guillemot, 2021). My own research is centered around using qualitative methods to explore the diagnostic experiences of young women with endometriosis, and thus this research offered an insight into their experiences of pain in this condition. Guillemot highlighted that, through psychological questionnaires, women reported that their psychological quality of life was improved by knowing about their diagnosis for a longer period. This prompted me to consider the role of coping skills and practices for the individuals in my own research, and which I went on to discuss in my recently published article

(Wren & Mercer, 2021). These coping strategies were also considered with reference to the psychological impact of infertility for women with endometriosis, in an engaging 'Give Me 5 Minutes' presentation (Klinkenberg, 2021). Using similar methods, Klinkenberg addressed key factors in the impact of infertility on women's mental health, including sexual satisfaction and length of relationship. As a research team, although we had considered the specific role of infertility for the young women in our study, we had not yet considered the role of their partners in supporting family planning and fertility discussions. When I presented my own work on the first day of the conference, one of the questions probed my analysis of these discussions and my understanding of the network of support often employed by women experiencing reproductive difficulties. This prompted me to reflect upon my own understanding of this research, and lead to some changes in our approach to discussing the participants' poignant experiences. Furthermore, the interest from other researchers both during and following this presentation, gave me the confidence to eventually pursue the publication of my Masters thesis (Wren & Mercer, 2021).

At the time of the conference, I had just begun my PhD which prompted a more clinical focus to Health Psychology research, working in the Behavioural Genetics Group at Cardiff University, UK. During this time, my research plan remained unclear but for our first study, we were focusing on exploring mood and neurodevelopmental disorder-associated traits in participants with a congenital skin disorder, X-linked ichthyosis (XLI), ichthyosis vulgaris (IV) or psoriasis. During the third day of the conference, I attended a poster talk by another

PhD student who was interested in the prevalence of mental health disorders in young people with chronic skin conditions (Flinn, 2021). Flinn was conducting a systematic review and meta-analysis in this area, and although at this point, she was conducting title/abstract screening, this prompted me to get in contact about her work. This opportunity to network with Flinn and others involved in related research, encouraged me to view my own research through a new lens, with an increased focus on Health Psychology. This has since influenced my own reflective practices and encouraged me to get involved in more collaborative projects in this area.

During the third day of the conference, I also attempted the Lab Series session 'Learning and doing translational health psychology together'. This was an eye-opening occasion that encouraged audience members to discuss their experiences of translational health psychology on an interactive Padlet, which we discussed as a collective group. As a new PhD student, this was an aspect of Health Psychology that I was not yet aware of and thus I started to view the discipline in a new, proactive sense. This session prompted me to think about research priorities in my own field and wider disciplines, specifically how to engage stakeholders, patients, and clinicians in the more complex processes within research. Since this session, I have also been involved in establishing a university-wide Translation of Research and Impact Network, specifically for Early-Career Researchers.

As I have mentioned, this conference was an eye-opening opportunity for networking, discussions, and learning, within two niche areas of my own research. I am hugely grateful to the EHPS EC Grants Committee for allowing me to attend, to present my own work and learn from other researchers. As I reflect on my recent first publication, it is clear that attending the conference provided me with a boost in confidence and commitment to my research, and I look forward to attending again in 2022.

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# Worldwide networking without leaving the house. Reflections on the 35th Annual Conference of the European Health Psychology Society.

**Simona Lysáková**

*Hunter College, USA*

It was a great honor, opportunity, and privilege to be among those awarded the 2021 EHPS Conference grant.

As a post-baccalaureate researcher, this grant allowed me to attend my first international conference, where I presented my research on vitiligo-related stigma and psychosocial functioning. The ways in which health psychology tackles global challenges, this year's conference theme, was prevalent throughout the many symposia, oral presentations, or poster sessions I attended. A major global issue incorporated throughout the conference was the current COVID-19 pandemic, bringing to light the important role that health psychologists in the prevention and promotion of better health.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak placed cities under lockdown worldwide two years ago, we have experienced plenty of challenges in all aspects of our lives. One particular change was the tradition of presenting our research among our colleagues in person and physically networking with one another to broaden our connections. Personally, this was the first time I could showcase my research internationally among my peers without taking a plane across an ocean. While traveling to Slovakia to present my research is still a goal of mine, I cannot dismiss the innovative platform EHPS created for its participants. Receiving the 2021 EHPS Conference grant allowed me to experience what a typical in-person poster session may not provide: the priceless experience of networking with other scholars amidst a global pandemic who

question behavioral medicine utilizing a comprehensive framework. Plus, our current circumstances provide for fascinating conversations against a common public health threat.

In the poster session, I presented a systematic review on stigma related to having a chronic skin disease, vitiligo, and associated psychosocial functioning. The conference's unique format allowed me to sit in on many presentations and posters sessions virtually, present my research to more than two dozen people at once, and collaboratively discuss my findings and future considerations at the end of my presentation. It also allowed me to discuss how my colleagues and I worked together, creating a sense of normalcy and collaboration that was necessary to address the poster session's theme: Coping with Chronic Illness, led by Dr. Maria Karelka. By having various participants engaged at once, they started to build off one another with constructive comments and questions to consider within my research.

The collaboration of ideas and constructive criticism within an intellectually stimulating group like the EHPS scholars sparked multiple discussions. I simultaneously had conversations about research with those with similar and contrasting interests. Having an open dialogue with other scholars resulted in suggestions for potential future research collaborations. It also highlighted challenges within behavioral medicine that are worth addressing. On a personal note, the conference was an eye-opening and intellectually stimulating experience for me. I have never attended an event that so positively impacted my personal and future professional intellectual

curiosity as a behavioral medicine researcher. Attending EHPS introduced me to the interventions that other researchers propose to aid those coping with chronic illnesses such as inflammatory bowel disease (Bártek & Kupka, 2021), Parkinson's Disease (Manceau et al. 2021). It also addressed the barriers associated with high medication non-adherence populations (Konstantinou et al., 2021).

I am pursuing a doctoral degree in medicine and attending this conference has impacted how I plan to approach future patients. It has given me some insight into possible tailored interventions to improve patient health. By collaborating and speaking with scholars at EHPS, I have further delved into my interest in behavioral medicine while examining the continuous efforts to promote better adjustment to chronic diseases. Health psychology researchers consistently reach new frontiers and translate their findings into practice (that we luckily learned about at the conference). Furthermore, discussing the future of behavioral medicine with scholars was inspiring. It left me feeling excited to further network and contribute to this field of work throughout my career.

I want to graciously acknowledge the EHPS Grant committee, which made my participation at this conference possible. Every aspect of the event was thought-provoking and intellectually stimulating, and it was an honor to be allowed to present my research at an internationally represented conference. I also want to thank Caroline F. Z. Stuhlmann, M.S., Caren Jordan, Ph.D., and Tracey A. Revenson, Ph.D., for guiding me throughout my research no matter what the pandemic threw at us. Lastly, thank you to my fellow EHPS attendees for being so interactive and making the best of the situation at hand.

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