

Austria Report 2015

Legislative development

A new version of the Austrian Act of Psychologists passed the Parliament in July 2013. Health psychology as an own discipline has now a significant appreciation.

The new law includes the following key points:

- Term "Psychologist" is reserved for people with an university degree in psychology (at least 300 ECTS credits)
- Postgraduate education and training for the acquisition of theoretical and practical competences in health psychology for a total of 1.940 hours:
 - Acquisition of theoretical professional competence in a minimum of twelve months of at least 340 units: Basic module with a minimum of 220 units and advanced module with a minimum of 120 units
 - Acquisition of practical professional competence through health psychological work, including case supervision and self-awareness for a minimum of 1.628 hours
- Professional qualifications:
 - Persons have the right to exercise the profession of health psychologist if they:
 - are authorised to use the professional title of Psychologin/Psychologe (psychologist)
 - have demonstrated the acquisition of professional competence, in particular, by submission of the final certificate
 - are of legal capacity
 - have demonstrated the physical and mental fitness and trustworthiness necessary for fulfilling the duties of the profession
 - have taken out professional indemnity insurance
 - have communicated a place of work
 - are registered on the list of healthcare psychologists

- Precise description of the activities of Health Psychologists and Clinical Psychologists
- Clarification of professional obligations

The list of all licensed health psychologists is published by the Ministry of Health (<http://gesundheitspsychologie.ehealth.gv.at/>).

Academic development

Some examples of actual research-topics in health psychology in Austria are published in a very recent issue of the Journal "Psychologie in Österreich" (Volume 34, 2/3, 2014):

- Positive Human Development – Self-Esteem, Self-Compassion and Flourishing (A. Bucher)
- Happiness Research - Insights and Consequences (K. Ruckriegel)
- The Power of Positivity (P. Streit, M. Wohlkönig)
- Physical Activity and Well-Being: Affective Reactions to Exercise (L. Ledochowski, P. Kopp-Wilfling, A. Schwertfeger, S. Höfer, M. Kopp)

Applied development

Austrian health psychologists are active in areas of preventive health services, health protection and health promotion. It is also the goal to change specific health-damaging lifestyles. For example health psychologists work in the framework of "Women's and Men's Health Centers", the "Austrian Smokefree Hotline", "Inpatient Smoking Cessation-Program", "Intervention-Programs for Weight Reduction and Improvement of Physical Activity" a.s.o.

Some of the topics with special interest are found published in the Journal "Psychologie in Österreich" (Volume 34, 2/3, 2014):

- How to overcome One's Weaker Self: Bridging the Intention-Behaviour-Gap at the Cardiology Ward (M. Platter, A. Huber, C. Hölzl, M. Hofer, D. Renn, S. Höfer)
- Health Promotion and Prevention in Old Age – A Report About an Empirically Supported Project on Health-Promotion in Old Age (A. Laireiter, A. Somweber)

- From Private Practice for Practical Application: A Psychologist's Own Happiness – How to Recognize It, Keep It and Increase It (H. Kernstock-Redl)

Conferences and misc

After Austria has hosted the 28th Conference of the EHPS (Innsbruck, 26th -30th August 2014), there will be held the 12th Congress of the "Fachgruppe Gesundheitspsychologie" in Graz (17th -19th September 2015) this year. After Austria organized the 28th Conference of the EHPS (Innsbruck, 26th -30th August 2014), the 12th Congress of the German "Fachgruppe Gesundheitspsychologie" takes place in Graz (17th -19th September 2015). The 8th Symposium on "Smoking Diagnosis and Intervention", which is very popular among Austrian health psychologists, is planned for 3rd October 2015 in Carinthia.

An own Division of Health Psychology (leitung.gespsy@boep.or.at) within the Professional Association of Austrian Psychologist was founded in January 2015.

The separation of the Division Clinical and Health Psychology was carried out based on the new Act of Psychologists.

The Division of Health Psychology has set the goal of professional policy to strengthen the health psychologists in Austria and to promote health psychology as an independent discipline in cooperation with other disciplines of psychology.