

ANNUAL REPORT - BULGARIA 2014/2015

National Delegate: Anna Alexandrova-Karamanova

Academic development

Sofia University's doctoral programme in health psychology awaits its official accreditation by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency in 2015. One PhD student graduated from the programme in the 2014/2015 period, and two new students have started their PhD studies.

Research

Researchers from the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Health Psychology Research Center are participating in the 2013/2014 wave of the WHO collaborative cross-national survey Health Behaviour in School-aged children (HBSC, www.hbsc.org) in cooperation and with the financial support of UNICEF-Bulgaria. Being Bulgaria's second participation in HBSC (after wave 2005/2006), this will allow for analysis of trends regarding multiple health related variables.

The health psychology group at Sofia University is conducting two research projects: "Psychological characteristics of attitudes towards social networking sites (Facebook) and well-being" and "Health anxiety, cyberchondria and well-being".

Applied developments

The Health Psychology Research Center, Sofia, Bulgaria, implemented an e-mental health intervention as part the EU Health Programme 2008-2013 project "Preventing Depression and Improving Awareness Through Networking in the EU (PREDI-NU)". A multilingual on-line resource www.ifightdepression.com has been developed, containing guided self-management tool for depression, as well as depression awareness material.

EHPS-related activities

Bulgarian health psychologists have participated in the 28th Conference of the EHPS, 26-30 August 2014, Innsbruck, Austria, and are going to participate in the 29th Conference of the EHPS, 01-05 September 2015, Limassol, Cyprus.

Conferences

- The triennial 7th Bulgarian National Congress of Psychology, organized by the Bulgarian Psychological Society, was held on 31 October-2 November 2014 in Sofia. A specialized health psychology section with 11 papers was included in the program for a third consecutive edition of the congress.

The Health Psychology Research Center, Sofia, Bulgaria, organized a symposium “Improving quality and safety in the hospital: The link between organizational culture, burnout and quality of care (ORCAB)” within the Congress.

- The 20th Jubilee conference “Personality. Motivation. Sport.”, organized by the National Sports Academy, took place on 12 December 2014 in Sofia. Among other themes, papers discussed health related aspects of physical activity and sport.
- The annual conference of the Department of Psychology at the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences was held on 28 May 2015 in Sofia. The 8th National School for PhD students and young researchers was conducted in parallel. Both scientific events included dedicated sections on health, well-being and quality of life.
- The 5th International conference “Education, Science, Innovations – ESI’2015”, organized by the European Polytechnic University, took place on 10 June 2015 in Pernik, Bulgaria. About one third of the papers in the “Innovation in Psychology” section presented research in the health psychology domain.
- The international conference “Leadership and organization development”, organized by the Department of Social, Work and Educational Psychology at Sofia University, was held on 19-21 June 2015 in Kiten, Bulgaria. A special occupational health psychology section with 27 papers was held within the conference.

In Memoriam of Prof. Dr. Hayganouch Silguidjian, D.Sc.

Prof. Hayganouch Silguidjian, a founder of academic health psychology in Bulgaria and a longtime member of the European Health Psychology Society, lost the battle with cancer on 8 January 2015. Prof. Silguidjian was the first to introduce health psychology in higher education in Bulgaria through the inclusion of a health psychology course in the Bachelor psychology programme of Sofia University in 2000. She inspired students and colleagues to engage in health psychology research and teaching and thus an active health psychology group was formed at Sofia University. Prof. Silguidjian supervised several health psychology doctoral students which later on led to the establishment of the health psychology doctoral programme at Sofia University.