

## **EHPS – NATIONAL DELEGATE REPORT: Lithuania (2018/2019)**

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**General considerations** Health psychology study programs are well-established and very popular in Lithuania. Health psychology practice is integrated in the legislative framework of health care services, under the title of medical psychologist. The Lithuanian Psychologist's association has a Clinical and health psychology committee, while the Lithuanian Health Psychologists Union is the specialized professional NGO established in 2001.

**Conferences** There are no specialized conferences devoted only to the health psychology, however in the annual congress of the Lithuanian Psychologist's association a section for clinical and health psychology is organized every year. Lithuanian psychologists also participate with presentations in EHPS annual congresses.

**Legislation** A new document legislating practice (called the Medical Norm) for Medical Psychologists has been adopted May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and came into power June the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. Health psychology and clinical psychology education are the two specializations that are required qualifications for becoming psychologist practicing in the field of medicine. Only education requirements are set, but no internship or supervised practice have been set. No licencing system for any psychology specialization is implemented in Lithuania. The new document outlines in detail rights and responsibilities, competencies and skills of a psychologists working in health care services.

New proposal active since 2018 for the Law of the Psychology Practice and is under review in the Lithuanian parliament. Different variants of this law have been discussed for over 10 years. Current version outlines licensing regulation, requirements for supervisions. If adopted it will regulate activities of all psychologists, including healthy psychology practitioners. However, timeline for the adoptions is not clear.

**Education** Vytautas Magnus University has the oldest Health Psychology Master Program, active since 1998 and in 2019 42 students have enrolled in the first year. There are smaller programs in the Lithuanian Health Sciences University (bachelor and master programs) and Vilnius University (master program). All programs are accredited and have been reviewed by the international bodies. Lithuanian Health Sciences university has undergone assessment in 2017, while Vytautas Magnus University program was evaluated in 2018 and received excellent assessment. Many programs in nearly all higher education institutions have health psychology as a discipline. There are no doctoral programs specifically in health psychology. Dissertations are defended in the field of social sciences and subfield of psychology, without further differentiation.

**Research** There is an increasing number of studies, applied research projects and publications (including dissertations in social and biomedical sciences) on topics related to health promotion, disease prevention and rehabilitation, positive health, etc. It is difficult to differentiate these themes from medical, public health or other health service research and they can't be entirely identified as Health Psychology.