

**Country:** Latvia

**National Delegate:** Kristine Martinsone and Jelena Kolesnikova

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### **PROFESSIONAL MASTER PROGRAM “HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY” IN LATVIA**

Riga Stradins University (RSU) Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare, in the Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy, has started to implement the Professional Master Program “Health Psychology” since 2012. The lecturers and students of the program, members in the Latvian Health Psychology association (LHPA), take part and organise different activities in order to promote development of health psychology in Latvia. In 2015/2016 academic year, the lecturers and students took part in local and international conferences, as well as organised different seminars and courses of continuing education, developed the monograph “Health Psychology”, as well as participated in other activities that are described below.

#### ***Participation in scientific conferences in Latvia***

RSU Scientific conference and University of Latvia Scientific conference, Psychology section (following are some of the reports).

J. Ļubenko. E-intervention Opportunities in Psychology: efficiency and limitations.

K. Sneidere, J. Harlamova, V. Arnis, K. Martinsone, V. Perepjolkina, A. Stepens. Cognitive Processes and Aerobic Physical Activities in Seniors.

J. Duhovska, K. Martinsone, I. Millere, D. Baltina. E-intervention Opportunities of Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Patients with Chronic Breast Cancer: literature review.

#### ***Participation in the international conferences in Latvia***

Reports on topics of local health psychology were provided at international conferences.

**16-18 September, 2015.** “4th Baltic & North Sea Conference on PRM”. 6 presentations about the development of Latvian Clinical Personality Test based on biopsychosocial approach.

**16-17 October, 2015.** RSU and LHPA International scientific practical conference “New Frontiers in Health Psychology” (following are some of the reports).

S. Kreitler. Psychooncology: New Frontiers in Health Psychology.

E. Neter. Health psychology development in Europe. European Health Psychology Society. Health psychologist`s professional practice.

See more: <http://www.rsu.lv/studentiem/520-sabiedribas-veselibas-un-socialas-labklajibas-fakultate/9465-psihologijas-dienas-rsu-pulce-plasu-interesentu-loku-un-iezime-turpmakas-sadarbibas-aprises-aktualu-problemu-risinasana>

**14-16 April, 2016.** RSU Second International Practical conference “*Health and Development of Personality: integrative approach*”. 200 Latvian professionals of different branches were brought together. Guest lecturers from Lithuania, Italy, Great Britain and Czech Republic participated in the conference. 36 reports were united by three topics: development and adoption of psychological evaluation instruments, non-medical help for different clients and groups of patients, e-interventions, as well as professional education, development and practice (following are some of the reports).

S. Cipolleta. Exploring health and illness through qualitative methods.

A. Goštautas. Health psychology in Lithuania – integrative approach of science and practice in health care.

See more: <http://www.rsu.lv/fakultates/svslf/katedras/veselibas-psihologijas-un-pedagogijas-katedra>

### ***Participation in the international conferences***

**01-05 September, 2015.** 29th Conference of the European Society of Health Psychology “*Principles of Behaviour Change in Health and Illness*”.

K. Martinsone, V. Perepjolkina, K. Kolesnikova, & A. Stepsens. Biopsychosocial model: a new perspective in the development of a clinical personality test. Available: [http://www.ehps2015.org/files/EHPS2015\\_Conference\\_Abstracts\\_01092015.pdf](http://www.ehps2015.org/files/EHPS2015_Conference_Abstracts_01092015.pdf)

### ***RSU courses of continuing education***

Members of LHPA have implemented the courses of continuing education aimed at raising professionals’ interest and competences in health psychology.

- Prevention and dealing with Stress, Burnout syndrome.
- New research in Psychology about the role of personality in health and illness.
- Health behaviour aspects for a healthy lifestyle.
- Psychologist’s view on pain prevention and rehabilitation opportunities

Webinar with the lecture „*Health and Development in Early Childhood*” by Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Prof. Elena Nikolaeva, EHPS National Delegate (Russia).

### ***Collective monograph “Health Psychology”***

The monograph “*Health Psychology*” was presented at the Second International Conference “*Health and Development of Personality: integrative approach*”. This is the first extensive book about issues of health psychology. It was developed by members of LHPA. The scientific editor is asoc. prof. Dr. psych. Kristine Martinsone and assist. prof. Dr. med. Velga Sudraba (Publisher “RSU”, Riga, 2016). The book contains chapters on important issues of health psychology. The book might be useful for psychologists, all specialists in the health field, students of psychology and health and other specialists whose everyday work is connected with maintaining health and prevention of illnesses, stress reduction, health care of chronic patients, evaluation and optimisation of health behaviour, patients’ educating and improving communication in health care environment.

### ***Health Psychologists' Training***

After the successful accreditation, in 2015 17 young specialists graduated this programme. All of them are involved into the labor market of Latvia. In general, they all work in their specialities (in public medical and educational establishments) and in RSU administrative and academic structure. Employers in Latvia evaluate the first health psychologists highly. It is noteworthy that many students, who did their practical work in medical establishments, continue to practice in those places as psychologists after their graduation.

### ***LHPA and RSU organised events related to 'Psychology Day' in Latvia***

Days of Psychology have been organised since 2013 with the aim to promote discussion, as well as inform society about psychologists' practice.

**09-17 October, 2015.** LHPA participated in Days of Psychology and organised the following activities:

- International scientific practical conference "*New Frontiers in Health Psychology*" (as mentioned above).
- Seminars: Stress and Mindfulness practice; Professional psychological help in work with different patient groups; How to overcome stress and maintain healthy lifestyle; The essence and functioning of Meaning. Kreitler's Meaning System.
- Competition of young researchers

RSU Master Program "Health Psychology" student Kristine Sneidere reported her bachelor paper with the videopresentation, where she researched false memories. The student got the second place in the competition.

### **LATVIAN HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY ASSOCIATION (LHPA)**

In 2015/2016, the membership of LHPA has increased and currently the organization has 32 members. On 11 December, 2015 elections took place and Jelena Kolesnikova continue to head LHPA with a new board of directors. (<http://www.veselibaspsihologija.lv>). The acknowledgement was expressed and the status of honorary members was granted to the previous board director prof. Kristina Martinsone and Sandra Dzilna for their important contribution of the association.

LHPA continues to actively improve the normative regulation of psychologist's work. LHPA board of directors participate in group meetings concerning law regulation of psychologist's work.

- LHPA organised 4 seminars and summer master class: Short-term psychological consultation, Mindfulness practice, The use of techniques of cognitive behavioural approach in work with chronic pains, Motivational interview.
- In the Latvian town Valmiera in "Sajutu Parks", LHPA advertising has been installed.
- Issues of Health Psychology were raised up and broadcasted in popular radio programs in Latvia.

### ***LHPA cooperation with professional organisations in Latvia***

In 2015 LHPA entered the Latvian Association of Rehabilitation Professionals. The cooperation with Latvian Association of Clinical Psychologists take place concerning the plan for the law of psychologists' practice. There is a cooperation with Latvian Association of Psychologists in the council.