

I) HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY IN LATVIA 2017–2018

The profession of psychologist in Latvia now is regulated by Law of Psychologists, which entered into force on 1 January 2018. Psychologists can conduct their professional activity in six areas of professional fields, including clinical and health psychology.

In accordance with the Law of Psychologists, there have been developed Psychologists' Regulations, which determine the order of registration, certification and recertification of psychologists in Latvia.

Author's collective lead by prof. Kristīne Mārtinsone has created a publication "Professional Activity of Psychologists in Latvia: Content, Organization, Regulation. Commentary on Law of Psychologists." [Psihologu profesionālā darbība Latvijā: saturs, organizācija, regulējums. Psihologu likuma komentāri.]. (Rīga: Tiesu namu aģentūra, 267 p).

In accordance with the Law on Psychologists and Psychologists' Regulations, a new Professional Standard for Psychologists that defines the content of education has also been developed.

II) EDUCATION, TRAINING & PROFESSIONALIZATION

1. Advocacy and promotion of health psychology

The representation and advocacy of the interests of health psychologists in Latvia (professionals working in this field) was facilitated by the work and active involvement of the Latvian Health Psychology Association (LHPA) in the elaboration of the regulations.

- LHPA in collaboration with other professional psychologists' societies participated in development of the Law of Psychologists.
- LHPA members contributed to the development of the publication "Professional Activity of Psychologists in Latvia: Content, Organization, Regulation. Commentary on Law of Psychologists".
- LHPA in collaboration with other professional psychologists' societies participated in the development of proposals for Psychologists' Regulations.
- LHPA in collaboration with other professional psychologists' societies participated in the development of Professional Standard for Psychologists.

2. Education and training initiatives/programs

In October 2017, Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) celebrated the 10th anniversary of psychology education (see: [https://www.rsu.lv/en/departament health psychology and pedagogy](https://www.rsu.lv/en/departament%20health%20psychology%20and%20pedagogy)) by organizing a conference, publishing a book on psychology education in RSU written by lecturers and students (see in Latvian: https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/book_download/Psihologijas-izglitiba-10-gadi-RSU_2017.pdf) and preparing an exhibition of information stands.

RSU is the only educational institution in Latvia where, in the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare, psychologists with specialization in health psychology are prepared. Study courses are conducted by the Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy.

To facilitate further career development of graduates of the Master's study programme "Health Psychology" as well as to encourage research in the field of health psychology, the Doctoral study programme "Psychology" has been established in RSU. The doctoral students' themes contribute to the research and development of psychological help practice.

The RSU Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare has established a Psychology Laboratory, which will increase the quality of learning process, facilitate the participation of students in research and promote the development of evidence-based practice.

LHPA members and RSU academic staff have applied for and completed the further training course "Psychological Assistance to Addicts. Fundamentals of a Motivational Interview", which was attended by students, psychologists, doctors, functional specialists and specialists from other assisting professions.

3. Activities for students

RSU students in collaboration with LHPA participated in the annual Psychology Days in Latvia.

- Open lectures “Occupational health psychology”, “The Functions and Health of the Human Body” and “Health Perception and Behaviour” were organized in RSU. Lectures were attended by students, psychologists and other interested persons.
- During the Psychology Days, LHPA members organized free individual psychological counselling sessions.

Several activities took place in the 10th anniversary of psychology education conference “Ten Years of Psychology Education in RSU”:

- graduates and students presented results of their research on health behaviour;
- a discussion between employers from medical settings and working health psychologists took place. During the discussion, different issues regarding the implementation of student praxis and psychologists’ employment in the medical environment were brought to attention;
- workshops for students on how to choose a workplace and how to communicate efficiently with employers were organized.

From the 19th to the 21st of April, the 4th International Conference “Health and Personality Development: an Interdisciplinary Approach” was organized in RSU by the Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy. Main issues considered in the conference were psychological assessment, psychological help in working with different client and patient groups, and professional work.

RSU is looking for effective solutions that would enable students to provide psychological support through information technology opportunities. Lecturer and LHPA member Jelena Lubenko developed collaboration with the developers of the web-based intervention MePlusMe (see: www.meplusme.com) and preparations have been made to conduct a study on the use of interventions to promote health behaviour among the RSU's foreign students.

RSU Psychology students are actively participating in the Scientific group. The aim of the Scientific group is to provide students with the opportunity to improve their research competences, to develop the ability to conduct independent research corresponding to the basic principles of scientific research, and to present and discuss the research results, thus developing critical and productive thinking.

In 2018, in the RSU Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare Psychology Laboratory the work on more detailed register of psychological tests / questionnaires was started, in which information about the assessment tools, developed in Latvia (tests and questionnaires), are collected and regularly updated, in order to increase the quality of teaching processes and facilitate students' involvement in research, as well as promote evidence-based practice development.

Students participated in the RSU International Student Scientific Conference with oral presentations, and the student of the Bachelor's degree programme “Psychology” was awarded the third place.

III) ACTIVITIES

1. Major research projects (completed/under way)

Latvian National Research Programme Biomedicine for Public Health (BIOMEDICINE) 2014 – 2017 (sub-project Nr.5.8.2.):

- Sub-project: Development of the New Technology “Latvian Clinical Personality Inventory”.
- Sub-project: Establishing the Net Attainable Benefits of Long-term Exercise, “ENABLE”.

National Research Program 5.2. “Economic Transformation, Smart Growth, Governance and Legal Framework for the State and Society for Sustainable Development – a New Approach to the Creation of a Sustainable Learning Community (EKOSOC-LV)” 2014–2017.

Project No. 48-23/2017/0452. 2017–2020. “Development of a Computerised Personality Assessment System of an Individual”.

Project NPAD-2017-10077. “Age Is Not an Obstacle”.

Project “Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network”.

2. Conferences & meetings

On October 5–7, 2017, RSU Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy organized an anniversary scientific and practical conference “Ten Years of Psychology Education in RSU”.

On April 19–21, 2018, RSU Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy” in co-operation with LHPA organized annual international conference “Health and Personal Development: an Interdisciplinary Approach”.

On May 25–26, 2018, International Scientific Conference “Society, Integration, Education” Psychology section was organised in collaboration with Rēzekne Academy of Technologies and Klaipēda University.

3. Publications

Berndt, N., Höfer, S., Kolesnikova, J., & Vilchinsky, N. (2017). Legal regulation of Health Psychology as a profession. *The European Health Psychologist. The Bulletin of the European Health Psychology Society*, 19 (6), 389-393.

Ļevina, J., & Mārtinsons, K. (2018). Anomia, Social Participation and Subjective Well-being: a Psychological Perspective. In S. Kruk (Ed.), *Pluralism Anxiety. Acting Socially in Latvia* (pp. 67-90). Rīga: RSU.

Ļubenko, J., Perepjolkina, V., Mārtinsons, K., Rancāns, E., & Stepens, A. (2018). The relationship between suicide ideation, depressive symptoms and personality traits in elderly: pilot study results. *Society. Integration. Education. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, 7, 129-139.

Majore-Dūšele, I., Paiča, I., Mārtinsons, K., & Millere, I. (2018). Characteristics of mindfulness based interventions for different patient groups – literature review. *Society. Integration. Education. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*. 7, 140-152.

Mārtinsons, K. (Ed.). (2017). *Ten years of psychology education in Rīga Stradiņš University [Psiholoģijas izglītības desmit gadi Rīgas Stradiņa universitātē]*. Rīga: Rīgas Stradiņa Universitāte.

Mārtinsons, K. (Ed.). (2018). *Professional Activity of Psychologists in Latvia: Content, Organization, Regulation. Commentary on Law of Psychologists [Psihologu profesionālā darbība Latvijā: saturs, organizācija, regulējums. Psihologu likuma komentāri.]* Rīga: Tiesu namu aģentūra.

Paičs, I., Mārtinsons, K., & Ļubenko, J. (2018). Self-help practices: literature review. *Society. Integration. Education. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, 7, 196-207.

Pāvulēns, J., Mārtinsons, K., & Mihailova, S. (2018). *Counselling support for students [Konsultatīvais atbalsts skolēniem]*. Rīga: RAKA.

Purvlice, B., Mārtinsons, M., Pipere, A., & Bortaščenoks, R. (2018). Identity of professional groups providing psychological help: a literature review. *Society. Integration. Education. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, 7, 229-239.

Terehova R. (2018). Psychological needs of dementia patients in social care institution: a qualitative study. *Society. Integration. Education. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, 7, 270-279.

Šneidere, K., Montemurro, S., Mondini, S., Harlamova, J., Ulmane, Z., & Stepens, A. (2018). Cognitive reserve and cognitive performance in healthy Latvian seniors. *Society. Integration. Education. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, 7, 261-269.

4. Awards, recognitions etc.

On 21 September 2017 Kristīne Mārtinsons received a letter of thanks from the Ministry of Health for her continued contribution to the development of higher education and promotion of research in the field of health psychology.

WORKING GROUPS

The following working groups have been established and are active in RSU:

- Working group “Development of the Latvian Clinical Personality Test with Functional Indicators”.
- Working group “Establishing the Net Attainable Benefits of Long-term Exercise, “ENABLE””.
- Working group on the web-based intervention to promote healthy lifestyles “A Programme for Promoting Health Behaviour of RSU Students”.
- RSU Psychology Studies Quality Council.

5. Collaboration with other societies (National and International); projects; groups etc.

During 2017–2018, cooperation with professional psychologists' associations was organized to develop proposals for Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations laying down procedures for the registration, certification and recertification of psychologists in Latvia (Psychologists' Regulations) and to develop proposals for Professional Standard for Psychologists.

LHPA Honorary Member Kristīne Mārtinsone is a member of the board of Latvian Association of Rehabilitation Professional Organisations. Kristīne Mārtinsone coordinates the collaboration on the issue of integration of health psychologists in the healthcare environment and provision of rehabilitation services.

6. Promotion and member recruitment

RSU Bachelor's study programme "Psychology", Master's study programme "Health Psychology" and Doctoral study programme "Psychology" offers the students the opportunity to participate in the work of LHPA, as well as to attend seminars and workshops organised by the LHPA.

Workshops organized for LHPA psychologists and other specialists: "Topicalities of the Regulation of Psychologists' Professional Activity", "Proficient Empathy" and "Working with Alcohol-dependent Personalities".

All abovementioned events and activities have promoted LHPA's recognition and popularity, as well as attracted new members.

7. Communication

Practical Health Psychology, the EHPS blog based on topical research in health psychology with the aim of providing information to health workers and interventionists, is regularly being translated into Latvian, and communication and information about the blog is disseminated. Previously, blog articles were translated by Gunta Freimane, currently – by Andžela Berķe, under the scientific guidance of Kristīne Mārtinsone (see <http://practicalhealthpsychology.com/lv/vision/>).

LHPA webpage is maintained (see in Latvian: <http://veselibaspsihologija.lv/lv/>).

A Facebook page is maintained (see in Latvian: <https://www.facebook.com/veselibaspsihologija/>).

A Twitter account is maintained.

Participation in broadcasts on the activities of health psychologists in Psychology Days in 2017.

IV) PLANNED/FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

RSU faculty (LHPA members) and students are involved in different projects (also see above):

- Assessing the potential in the seniors' brain, caused by cognitive activity, with the EEG.
- Project "Development of Digitalized Personality Assessment System". Researchers aim to develop a digitalized personality assessment application as well as sensory system and software that will be compatible with smart devices, in order to minimize the amount of misinterpretations.

LHPA members are involved in different events all around Latvia that promote the professional activities of psychologists:

- Organising and planning events for the Psychology Days in 2018.
- Organising the 5th RSU Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy's International Conference "Health and Personality Development: an Integrative Approach".
- Proposals for improving the regulatory framework for the integration of a health psychologist into a healthcare environment will be developed in collaboration with state administration institutions and professional organisations.