

Dear Members,

We are delighted to share with you our intellectual experience from the European Health Psychology (EHPS) annual conference, which was held this September in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Our division was very active in this conference. First, our president, **Prof. Sonia Lippke**, has assembled four eminent IAAP-Div 8- representatives: **Prof. Aleksandra Luszczynska**, **Prof. Brian Hall**, **Dr. Marta Bassi**, and **Prof. John de Wit**. **The four experts shared** their recent research findings and conclusions for future directions in a symposium titled **“Individuals’ health, behavior and coping: professionals and community-based, participatory approaches to promote individuals’ health”**. The aim of the symposium was to shed light on different aspects of individuals’ health and health behavior, as well as on the role of professionals in the health psychology and public health arena. The lectures tapped varied issues relevant for applied health psychology around the world.

**Prof. Aleksandra Luszczynska from Poland** presented the results of a systematic review and meta-analysis on the association between anxiety symptoms and sedentary behavior. It was found that the associations between sedentary behavior and anxiety were weak across age groups, among healthy individuals, and those with chronic illness. Importantly, as the majority of evidence was of correlational and cross-sectional character (71%), the authors were unable to establish if anxiety precedes sedentary behavior or if sedentary behaviour precedes anxiety.

**Prof. Brian Hall from Macau, China**, investigated the contribution of social support and discrimination to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms’ severity among female Filipino domestic workers in China. He revealed that women who reported greater discrimination also reported greater current PTSD symptom severity. Social support was not always beneficial supporting a more nuanced view of the support buffering hypothesis among migrants.

**Dr. Marta Bassi from Italy** focused on illness perceptions, coping and well-being among persons with multiple sclerosis. Basing on Leventhal’s Common Sense Model, she tested the mediational role of coping strategies and social support between illness perceptions and both positive and negative well-being indicators (satisfaction with life and depression) among persons with MS. Dr. Bassi detected that illness beliefs were related to well-being, both directly and indirectly through coping strategies and social support.

**Prof. John de Wit from The Netherlands** raised our awareness of the importance of engaging affected communities in our endeavor for better health and recovery. Partnership approaches are rapidly gaining importance across public policy domains and can enhance the impact of health psychology to policy and practice. Participatory approaches reflect a commitment to the democratic right of those affected to be involved and require recognition of the complementarity of expert and lay knowledge and of deductive and inductive approaches to the development of behavior change approaches.

The symposium was chaired by our former president: **Prof. Urte Scholz**, and our secretary **Prof. Yiqun Gan**. Our communication officer, **Dr. Noa Vilchinsky**, discussed the issues raised in each of the talks and shed light on the common problems we share as individuals and

professionals in the area of applied health psychology, as well on the needed solutions for better health and quality of life to all. **Prof. Sonia Lippke** has ended the session by creatively evoking the audience's awareness of our division's goals and mission by employing the "Kahoot" interactive activity.



Our symposium contributors:

From left to right: **Prof Aleksandra Luszczynska, Prof. Yiqun Gan, Prof. Sonia Lippke, Prof. Urte Scholz, Dr. Noa Vilchinsky, and Dr. Marta Bassi.**

Behind: **Prof. Brian Hall and Prof. John de Wit.**

Aside from the integrative symposium, many talks were presented by Division 8 members and by the members of our executive board. Few examples:

**Prof. Urte Scholz**, our former president, together with her colleagues from the University of Zurich, Dr. Corina Berli, and Dr. Janina Lüscher have presented the results of two studies with romantic partners in which they have focused on the role of beliefs and wishes in the provision of health-related negative social control in couples. They showed that across both studies, higher provision of negative social control was primarily related to higher than usual beliefs that control was helpful for the partner and higher than usual own wishes for the partner to change.

**Prof. Ralf Schwarzer**, our advisory board member and former past president, and his colleagues, Dr. Sally Di Maio, Dr. Antonia Domke, Dr. Jan Keller, and Prof. Nina Knoll, showed that regular physical activity in the context of osteoarthritis of the knee can be sustained by volitional factors such as planning and action control. However, this seems to work only in particular subgroups of patients such as those who are less old or less overweight.

**Dr. Noa Vilchinky**, our communication officer, and her colleagues from Israel Keren Fait, Prof. Rachel Dekel, Prof. Shlomi Matetzky, and Prof. Hanoch Hod, presented a longitudinal dyadic study in the context of cardiac illness. Dr. Vilchinky showed that each partner's fear of illness progression was significantly associated with his/her own levels of PTSD, both cross-sectional and over four months. In addition, four months after the event, caregivers were found to be more susceptible to patients' fears than patients were, however, this trend had reversed when PTSD was measured eight months after the event.

To sum up, it was a variety of global, diverse and interesting research projects with much potential for a significant impact in the field of applied health psychology. We hope to meet again soon and see more members of our division joining these inspiring events.

The most important event to come: **our association centennial conference to be held in Cancun, Mexico, December 2020!!!**