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InterACT

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The Croatian Psychiatric Association: Update of Current Activities



In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Croatian Psychiatric Association (CPA) together with other Croatian associations in the field of mental health is advocating for the recognition of mental health care as one of the essential services to be offered as part of the COVID-19 health response, relying on the number of documents that were issued by the CPA in March 2020 and available at <http://www.psihijatrija.hr/site/?p=3835>.

To maintain the regular organisation of the **16th Croatian Psychiatric Days**, the congress is going to be fully virtual, from **November 25-27th 2020**. As every year, the CPA will award early career psychiatrists who finished their PhD in 2019, and who published the paper in the journal with the highest impact factor.

Associate Professor Martina Rojnic Kuzman, MD, PhD, General Secretary

Professor Alma Mihaljevic Peles, MD, PhD, President
Croatian Psychiatric Association

Covid-19 Pandemic Appeal



Polish Psychiatric Association and the National Consultant in the field of Psychiatry would like to make the following appeal.

[Read more...](#)

Polish Psychiatric Association

Online Platform for Support in Psychological and Psychiatric Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Russia



The COVID-19 pandemic causes people to experience increased anxiety, distress, and other reactive states. This poses new challenges for mental health professionals in psychoprophylaxis and crisis counseling for a wide range of citizens. The Russian Society of Psychiatrists has created a special interdisciplinary online platform "Psychological and Psychiatric Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic" where recommendations, best practices, reference information on hot lines, and researches for the treatment of mental disorders and psychological support developed by medical and non-medical institutions, as well as non-profit organizations and patient communities, both in Russian and English are collected: <https://psychiatr.ru/news/1102>.

Natalia Treushnikova,
President of the Union for Mental Health and
member of the **Russian Society of Psychiatrists**

News and Reports from NPAs events

"Sensitive to Words. Sensitive to People."



The Polish Psychiatric Association is proud to have initiated a social campaign entitled "**Sensitive to words. Sensitive to people.**" The campaign is addressed to journalists, the media, art and culture professionals (screenwriters, writers) and politicians, with an aim to raise public awareness of the language used in the media, social communication and culture regarding mental disorders and their treatment. As the campaign focuses on words, language and

metaphors, the PPA has joint forces with the Polish Language Council in all the organizational efforts. The other invited partners include "Hej Koniku" patient organization, Journalists' Club for the Promotion of Health and Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. The campaign was launched on October 8, 2020 during a press conference held at the Polish Press Agency headquarters. Presented recommendations developed by the Polish Psychiatric Association in cooperation with the Polish Language Council regarding communication on mental disorders in the public space immediately received wide media response.

[Read more...](#)

Dr Sławomir Murawiec
Prof Jerzy Samochowiec
Polish Psychiatric Association

Responsible Use of Benzodiazepines: Recommendations for Mental Health Care



A group of research fellows and research associates in the field of psychiatry and pharmacology from the Faculty of Medicine University of Belgrade recently prepared the monograph entitled "[Responsible use of benzodiazepines: recommendations for mental health care](#)" published by the Institute of Mental Health. In this manual, the first-of-its-kind in Serbia, the authors present a history of benzodiazepine use, their pharmacological characteristics, indications, contraindications and potential risks of their use and misuse. Although benzodiazepines are indubitably effective medicines in short-term, their prolonged use might be associated with certain risks. The goal of this manual, intended for psychiatrist and other health workers, is to influence more rational prescription of benzodiazepines, as well as to raise public awareness on their

responsible use.

Sanja Andric Petrovic, MD, PhD,
Goran Mihajlovic, MD, PhD, President
Serbian Psychiatric Association

Mental Health Conditions of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine



In Ukraine, 1,450,798 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are registered. Forced migration results in negative mental health consequences.

The aim of our study, performed using clinical-psychopathological, psychometric, psychodiagnostic, and statistical methods, was to assess mental health conditions in IDPs.

Among 213 IDPs examined, the 1st group (94 IDPs) without mental health problems, the 2nd group (68 IDPs) with certain mental health disorder symptoms, and the 3rd group (51 IDPs) with mental health disorders were detected.

The data obtained suggest the necessity of a timely diagnosis of mental health disorders in IDPs to provide the care needed.

[Read more...](#)

Prof. Nataliya O. Maruta, MD, PhD, DMSc, Vice President

Assoc.Prof. Tamara V. Panko, MD, PhD

Assoc.Prof. Olena Ye. Semikina, MD, PhD

Dr. Halina Yu. Kalenska, PhD, MPsych

Assoc.Prof. Oleksandr Ye. Kutikov, PhD, MSc, MAT, Secretary General

**Association of Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Narcologists of
Ukraine**

RCPsych Celebrates Black History Month



The RCPsych celebrated Black History Month in October 2020 by celebrating the achievements and contributions of black people to society as well as marking the contributions of some of our black psychiatrists to mental health services. Celebrations included numerous webinars, blogs, staff briefing sessions, the feature of an Equality Action Plan, and equality roundtables.

The UK saw the increased morbidity and mortality in BAME health care and key workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The RCPsych Black History Month aimed to shed light on the barriers of access people of colour still experience in the UK and the disparity that it creates mentally and physically within the community.

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/blogs/detail/black-history-month/2020/10/01/reflecting-on-black-lives-matter-and-celebrating-the-new-association-of-black-psychiatrists>

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/black-history-month>

Royal College of Psychiatrists

World Mental Health Day Webinar by Psychiatric Association of Turkey: “Mental Health and Promoting Mental Health for All”



Amidst the challenges globally experienced in mental health due to COVID-19 pandemic, World Health Organization declared the goal of this year's World Mental Health Day (WMHD) campaign as increased investment in mental health. In times of crisis, even when the issue is related to

physical health, often the resources, both financial and human, are diverted away from mental health. Therefore, the theme for the WMHD activities emphasized an important deficit which is experienced for a long time, but became more urgent with the pandemic.

[Read more...](#)

Assoc.Prof. Koray Başar, EPA *Secretary General*
Psychiatric Association of Turkey

Earthquake in Izmir: Rapid and Organized Response by the Psychiatric Association of Turkey



Last month, on November 10th Friday afternoon at 14.51, a strong earthquake with magnitude reported as 6.6 on Richter's scale was experienced with an epicentre in the Aegean Sea, affecting islands and the west Anatolian coast. The earthquake had a severe impact on Izmir, third most crowded city in Turkey.

As it should be in times of difficulty, solidarity appeared to be the key in the struggle for psychosocial support following the İzmir earthquake. The letter of support by Professor Philip Gorwood, on behalf of the EPA, written to the President of the PAT was sincerely appreciated as a sign of solidarity.

[Read more...](#)

Assoc. Prof. Koray Başar, *Secretary General*
Prof. Simavi Vahip, *Official Representative at EPA*,
Psychiatric Association of Turkey

The EPA Commends the PAT following Earthquake in Izmir



Following the recent earthquake in Izmir, Turkey, EPA President Philip Gorwood issued a letter of support to Prof. Ömer Bôke, President of the [Psychiatric Association of Turkey](#) (PAT). Prof. Gorwood conveyed the EPA's solidarity and commended the PAT for their swift action in implementing mental health care initiatives in the aftermath of the event. He expressed the EPA's sympathies for the loss of life and damages to the city, and called for a solidified front in these difficult times in order to continue supporting the psychological needs of society at large.

[Click here](#) to view the full letter of support to the PAT.

EPA Administrative Office

[Hot Topics from around Europe](#)

The Reform of Mental Health Care in Bulgaria: the Role of the EPA

In the frame of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) mission "To improve Psychiatry and Mental Health Care in



Europe”, in 2018 the EPA accepted an invitation to review mental health services in Bulgaria and advise the Ministry of Health regarding recommendations for a reform in mental health services.

The EPA panel report was published on the EPA website and official journal¹. Recently, a Bulgarian newspaper reported that “a complete reform of psychiatric care in Bulgaria is going to be implemented ... one of the main reasons for the reform is the criticism in the report of the European Psychiatric Association for psychiatric care in Bulgaria ...

[Click here](#) to view the full EPA report.

[Read more...](#)

Silvana Galderisi, EPA Past President
Julian Beezhold, EPA Secretary General
Wolfgang Gaebel, EPA Past President
Helen Killaspy
Drozdstoy Stoyanov
Vladimir Nakov
Zahari Zarkov
Hristo Hinkov

EPA-PTP Discussion on Polish Constitutional Tribunal Law on Protection of the Human Fetus and Conditions for the Permissibility of Abortion

Poland's top court on the 22nd Oct 2020 has ruled that abortions in cases of foetal defects are “unconstitutional”. The Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights said the day marked a "sad day for women's rights". Although the above-mentioned paragraphs are not



yet published, this statement was discussed by the Polish Psychiatric Association (PTP).

It was agreed that removal of said provision concerning severe foetal disabilities from the Act on family planning, protection of the human foetus and conditions for the permissibility of abortion is a *direct and outright hit against women* who experience such a tragedy.

The EPA President, Philip Gorwood, on behalf of the European Psychiatric Association, and the EPA Council of National Psychiatric Associations (NPA) Steering Committee Chair, Simavi Vahip, strongly supported this message, claiming that the core women's rights were dramatically challenged by such court statement.

Therefore, the PTP has published PTP link to an open letter concerning this matter (<https://www.facebook.com/polskietowarzystwopsychiatryczne> post from 28th Oct 2020) and agreed with the position statement of the Polish Supreme Medical Council (post on PTP Fb on 22nd Nov 2020) (below attached the translation of some parts of it).

[Read more...](#)

Prof Jerzy Samochowiec
Polish Psychiatric Association

Time for Action!

EPA Constance Pascal – Helen Boyle Prize 2021
Nominations are now open!



The EPA is pleased to announce the “**EPA Constance Pascal – Helen Boyle Prize of €10 000 for Outstanding Achievement by a Woman in Working to Improve Mental Health Care in Europe**”.

The Prize is named in honour of **Dr Helen Boyle**, an Irish-British psychiatrist, first female President of the Medico-Psychological Association (later to become the Royal College of Psychiatrists); and **Dr Constance Pascal**, a Romanian doctor, who was the first woman to qualify as a psychiatrist in France.

The deadline for nominations is **15 January 2021**.

See the [2020 winner](#) and find more information on the eligibility criteria and the nomination procedure [on the EPA website](#).

EPA Administrative Office

EPA e-Learning: New Features!



The EPA is continuously looking for ways to ensure that all mental health professionals can make the most of its training programmes and thanks to your feedback, we are thrilled to announce that two NEW options are now available:

- **Speed up or slow down the pace on all our videos** – click on the wheel at the bottom of the video and watch it up to x2 its normal speed
- **English subtitles** for our online course “Understanding and Treating Major Depressive Disorder” – click on the “CC” at the bottom of the video to turn on the subtitles

More upgrades are underway!

We would love to hear from you: what would you want to see next? [Let us know!](#)

[Visit the EPA e-Learning Platform](#)

Remember: Paid-up EPA members receive free access to the full catalogue of EPA online courses, so [join us now](#) for this great benefit, and many more.

EPA Administrative Office

[Brussels Digest](#)

The “Collaborating Expert Programme”: Gaining First-Hand Experience with the European Medicines Agency (EMA)



The European Medicines Agency (EMA) recently launched the “Collaborating Expert Programme”, to provide researchers with an opportunity to develop new competencies and share their expertise in the EMA’s scientific areas. These experts will perform research in regulatory science topics of public health in collaboration with the EMA, addressing important research questions to ultimately support regulatory decision-making.

The EPA is part of the network of eligible healthcare professionals’ organisations of the EMA and regularly collaborates with the Agency on mental health-related issues.

Find more information on the “Collaborating Expert Programme” and the open research positions [here](#).

EPA Brussels Office

EPA Sections in the spotlight

EPA Sections Coordination Virtual Meeting



The **EPA Sections coordination meeting** was held on 6 October 2020, the meeting was chaired by Prof. *Andrea Fiorillo*, Secretary for Sections. During the meeting, Prof. *Philip Gorwood*, EPA President, highlighted the importance of the Sections for the EPA and for the implementation of the Long-Term Plan of the Association.

The members of the *Task Force on Section* described the activities already implemented and some proposals were suggested to increase visibility, to improve administration and internal communication of the EPA Sections.

The most important figures of the Section’s submissions for the last 5 year were presented and Prof. *Fiorillo* highlighted the importance of a new project to bring together research and practice: “Book proposal on “ *Mental health research and practice in Europe: from evidence to experience*”.

On behalf of the **EPA Council of NPAs**, Prof. *Simavi Vahip* gave a presentation about the collaboration between Sections and NPAs. He

highlighted the common topics of interest between Sections and NPAs for future activities that can be implemented.

[Read the Agenda of the event here...](#)

Calendar

25 - 27 November 2020
(Virtual)

[16th Croatian Psychiatric Days](#)

18 - 20 December 2020
(Virtual)

[56th National Congress of Psychiatry / Turkey](#)

4 - 5 March 2021
(Rotterdam, The
Netherlands)

[Second International Conference of Crisis Coercion and
Intensive Treatment in Psychiatry](#)

10 - 13 April 2021
(Virtual)

[29th European Congress of Psychiatry](#)

24 - 26 June 2021
(Szczecin, Poland)

[46th Congress of Polish Psychiatrists](#)

1 - 5 September 2021
(Perugia, Italy)

[XII ISPS International Conference: Co-constructing healing
spaces for psychoses](#)

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This quarterly e-Newsletter is sent to the Presidents and Official Representatives of the EPA National Society Members (NPAs).

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