

Annual Report – Finland

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Within the Finnish psychological research, health psychology is a relatively small but a growing field. Research in the field is being conducted in several Finnish universities and research institutes, often in multidisciplinary teams. There are two health psychology professors in the country. Finland hosted the EHPS conference in Helsinki a decade ago, in 2004.

Professional activities

The Section of Health Psychology in the Finnish Psychological Society, originally formed 1993, aims 1) to increase the networking opportunities of the members working in areas of health psychology research and practice, as well as 2) to advance discussion of topics of psychological theory, research, health-enhancing interventions, and good professional practice. In 2013, there was a “generation shift” in the executive board, which currently consists of six people.

Activities of the section have included e.g. the **electronic publication of the Finnish Health Psychology Newsletter**. In 2014, a major activity of the section was to organize a **Health Psychology Symposium**, with the topic of “Evidence and research based promotion of well-being”, with high-quality talks from academics and practitioners in the field. The symposium was popular, with well over 150 participants registering more than one month before the symposium.

The Section collaborates with other national scientific (Society for Social Medicine in Finland, Section of Behavioral Medicine) and professional societies (The Finnish Psychological Association) as well as with health authorities. Future plans include setting up a Finnish Health Psychology Conference in 2015. The webpage address is <http://www.terveyspsykologianjaos.net/>

Education

Health Psychology studies in Finland are implemented as one of the national post-graduate programmes for the registration as special psychologists (LicPsych) demanding approximately four years of part-time studies. The studies are organised by a university network. The licentiate is an academic degree locating approximately half-way between the MA and the PhD. In addition to health psychology, the training is given in four areas of specialization (e.g., neuropsychology and psychotherapy). In addition to this training, health psychology related courses are also given in several other Finnish university departments, e.g. Social Psychology Unit at the University of Helsinki.