

## **EHPS - National Delegate Report: Greece (2011)**

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### **Introductory text** (revised)

Since 2004, the year that the 1<sup>st</sup> Health Psychology Conference was organised in Athens and the first post-graduate program in Health Psychology was launched at the University of Crete, Health Psychology specialisation in Greece has entered on a rather mature phase and has dynamically been expanded: Textbooks and papers - locally and internationally are published in a regular basis; health psychology-related courses keep being taught in different Universities and research groups have been established; the aforementioned postgraduate programme has been established; numerous health psychologists have been appointed to the National Health System and the Primary Care settings; the ex “Clinical Psychology Division” of the Hellenic Psychological Society has been renamed into “Clinical and Health Psychology Division”. The Division remains one of the main academic and research-related pockets in the country. It organises not only the main National Clinical and Health Psychology Conference every two years but also meetings regarding important issues like the relationship between health psychology as an academic field and the national health system as a field of practise.

### **National Associations** (revised)

Within the Hellenic Psychological Society (HPS), the Division of Clinical Psychology was established in 2005: <http://www.clinicalhealthpsychology.gr>. Recently, the old “Division of Clinical Psychology” was renamed into “Clinical and Health Psychology Division” in order to represent Health Psychology specialisation, reflecting the reality that many Greek health psychologists were initially trained as clinical psychologists.

As stated in the bylaws, the Division represents both Clinical and Health Psychology, but at the same time acknowledges the differences between the two disciplines.

The Clinical and Health Psychology Division has made a significant contribution to the development of health psychology in the country. Since its establishment, three National Conferences were held in Athens (2) and Thessaloniki. The conferences' themes were about theory-based research, evidence-based practice and the relationship between Community, Clinical, Health Psychology and Public Health. Additionally, Division's members actively participate in all National and International Conferences.

Several scientific meetings have also been organized. These were referring to specific issues, such as theory-based interventions, professional supervision, and health promotion.

A large number of health psychology-related studies were presented and issues regarding post-graduate training in health psychology were thoroughly discussed. Moreover, a national Behavioural Medicine society was established in 2007. Several health psychologists, some of which are members of the EHPS, were invited to actively participate in the Society.

### **Education, training and professionalism (revised)**

Regarding training, besides the post graduate program in Health Psychology at the University of Crete, modules concerning health psychology are also offered in post graduates courses in Clinical Psychology, as well as in Medical Schools and Public Health Institutes. Moreover, there are plans for establishing at least one more post-graduate program in health psychology within the next few years. Additionally, health psychologists are appointed to Universities and the already appointed colleagues obtain higher levels of academic rungs/ positions. Finally, during the last years, a fast growing number of young scientists are applying for PhD programs in Health Psychology.

At present, there is no national law regulation on the role of a Health Psychologist, although the title and the practice of a Psychologist are regulated. In general, tasks and responsibilities depend on a complex array of national or setting-related needs and customs. However, a close collaboration between the Hellenic Association of Hospital Psychologists and the Division of Clinical and Health Psychology of the HPS has been established. This collaboration aims at determining the appropriate

conditions and procedures regarding the training and supervision of post-graduate students in Health and Clinical Psychology, as well as professionals in the field. In this regard, a leaflet that includes relevant suggestions made by a joint committee was published. Also, an informal task force has been created in order to promote the implementation of these suggestions.

### **Reserach** (revised)

Several research teams exist across Greek Universities. Funding, however, is limited. These teams have significantly contributed to the publication of a number of new editions (mainly in Greek, but also in English), which included the work of Greek scientists living in the country and abroad. These editions are important for Health Psychology in Greece, which, as a relatively small market, suffers from original work published locally.

The research work in health psychology carried out in Greece is also noteworthy considering the short history of health psychology in the country and the shortage of resources (e.g., with respect to funding or specialized personnel). In any case, an increasing number of studies conducted in Greece “is translated” into publications in national and international journals.

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### *Main activities*

Following last years' activities on the issue, the European Certificate in Psychology (Europsy), Clinical and Health Psychology Division's co-ordinators keep working in collaboration with the Board of HPS and the Association of Greek Psychologists and the Application for Greece to start the procedures for delivering the Certificate was sent to EFPA.

### *Research*

The Department of Psychology of the University of Crete received a grant of 250.000 € for investigating the long term adjustment of patients with auto-immune diseases. The grant was given in the context of the “Aristeia” Programme of the Greek Ministry of Education for supporting the excellent research activities.

The following research grants have been appointed at the Nursing School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Special Research Account) for the period 2012-14:

Hatzoulis, M. & Paschali, A.: Burnout syndrome and its relation to empathy and emotional regulation in a sample of health care professionals.

Paschali, A. & Hatzoulis, M. The representations of illness and the ways of coping with illness, in a sample of cancer patients and their physicians: a dyadic relationship.

### *Conferences*

There is no doubt that the major event for this year was the organisation of the anniversary 25th EHPS Annual Conference. The conference was organised by the University of Crete in collaboration with the Clinical and Health Psychology Division of the Hellenic Psychological Association and took place September 20-24, 2011, at Hersonisos, Crete. It was considered as a very successful event. During the conference, there were organised: 4 keynote lectures; 3 debates; 27 symposia; 37 oral sessions; 97 poster sessions, each included 8-12 posters; 4 pre-conference full day workshops. Additionally, the regular activities (SYNERGY & CREATE workshops, as well as the "Meet the expert" event) took place. More than 1.000 delegates attended its program. Conference success was certified by delegates' evaluation (see [http://www.ehps.net/ehp/issues/2011/v13iss4\\_December2011.htm](http://www.ehps.net/ehp/issues/2011/v13iss4_December2011.htm) for details).

### *Selected Health Psychology Publications*

Paschali AA., Mitsopoulou E., Tsaggarakis V. & Karademas EC. (2012). Changes in Health Perceptions after Exposure to Human Suffering: Using Discrete Emotions to Understand Underlying Processes. PLoS ONE 7(4): e35854. 0035854, 1-

Stathopoulou H., Paschali A., Karanikola M., Poullos A., Grozou A., Katopodi A. & Tountas Y. (2011). Self-management of type 2 diabetes: self-efficacy beliefs and self care behaviors. Psychology and Health. (26, Suppl. 2), 73–253.

Paschali, A. & Tsitsas, G. (2010). Stress and Life Satisfaction among University Students. Annals of General Psychiatry, 9(Suppl. 1):S96