

EHPS - National Delegate Report: Greece (2010)

George Koulierakis Ph.D,
EHPS National Delegate,
National School of Public Health,
Department of Sociology
196 Alexandras Avenue
115 21 Athens
Greece
gkoulierakis@esdy.edu.gr

Introductory text

Since 2004, the year that the 1st 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 in a rather mature phase being dynamically 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 stabilised; numerous health psychologists have been appointed in 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 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 of health psychology as an academic field and the national health system as a field of practise. Finally, the country and the University of Crete were honoured by the EHPS by being appointed to organise the anniversarial 25th EHPS Annual Conference in September 2011, at Crete.

National Associations

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 in 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 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 thoroughly discussed, as well as issues regarding post-graduate training in health psychology. 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

Regarding training, besides the post graduate program in Health Psychology at the University of Crete, modules concerning health psychology are also delivered in post graduates studies 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 in Universities and the already appointed colleagues obtain higher levels of academic rungs. 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 in 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

Several research teams exist across Greek Universities. Funding, however, is limited. These teams have significantly contributed in 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.

Report 2010/11

Main activities

The Clinical and Health Psychology Division has set specific goals for the next years. Not only its members to keep being active in the scientific and academic era of Health Psychology (organisation of the national Clinical and Health Psychology Conference, presence to national and international Health Psychology Conferences, publications), but also – and mainly – to maintain and strengthen the connections with colleagues – professionals Health psychologists, who are away from the academia but much closer to the society (i.e. hospitals). The Division keeps seeking opportunities for a continuous dialogue and collaboration.

Another important issue – priority for the Division is the issue of the European Certificate in Psychology (Europsy), a qualification standard developed by the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA). Division's co-ordinators work in collaboration with the Board of HPS and the Association of Greek

Psychologists on the appropriate development and establishment of this Certificate in Greece.

Conferences

The 4th National Clinical and Health Psychology Conference was successfully organised on November 4-7 2010 at the National School of Public Health, in Athens. Conference title was “Community Clinical Psychology / Health Psychology and Public Health”. More than 600 scientists and students participated; a significant number of Health psychology-related workshops were organised. Three colleagues-members of the Division have already been appointed as editors for the upcoming book with selected presentations from the Conference.

Selected Health Psychology Publications

The latest textbook with selected presentations from the previous (3rd) National Clinical and Health Psychology Conference was published on November 2010:

Koulierakis, G., Paschali, A., Rotiska, V. and Kokkosi, M. (Eds) (2010). *Clinical and Health Psychology: Theory and Practice*. Papazisis Publications. Athens.

Additionally, the following Health Psychology textbook was translated in Greek and published within 2010:

Kayser, K. & Scott, J.L. (2010). *Psychological support of couples with cancer*. Scientific Editing by F. Anagnostopoulos. Pedion Publications. Athens.