

Annual Report - Ireland

Molly Byrne

National University of
Ireland, Galway

For the period of 2013/2014 Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) Division of Health Psychology (DHP) had 53 members. The PSI DHP committee was elected at the AGM held in May 2014, and held 4 Committee meetings and an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The committee included the following committee members: Frank Doyle (Chair), Philippa Coughlan (Previous Chair), Laura Coffey (Hon. Sec.), Catherine Darker (Hon. Treas.), Mary Ivers (Membership Sec.), Lisa Mellon (PR), Andrea Gibbons (PR), Deirdre Desmond, Pamela Gallagher, Stephen Gallagher and Molly Byrne.

Annual Psychology, Health and Medicine Scientific Conference

The 11th annual 'Psychology, Health and Medicine' Conference took place in the University of Limerick on May 28th 2014. The conference was jointly hosted by University of Limerick in partnership with Mary Immaculate College Limerick, the PSI DHP and the Northern Ireland Branch of the British Psychological Society Division of Health Psychology. The Scientific Committee for this year's conference included Stephen Gallagher/Siobhan Howard (Chair), Pamela Gallagher, Molly Byrne, Frank Doyle, Catherine Darker, Laura Coffey and Martin Dempster. Keynote speakers at this year's conference were: Professor Marion Hetherington, University of Leeds; Dr. Brian Hughes, NUI Galway; Professor Lynn Myers, Brunel University. Public talks were also given in conjunction with

the conference by Professor Orla Muldoon, Department of Psychology, UL, and Director for the Centre for Social Issues at UL, and Dr Kerry Greer, Department of Psychology, Mary Immaculate College.

Workshops

This year the DHP organised two half-day workshops to coincide with the Psychology, Health and Medicine conference, on Tues 27th May 2014, in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. The first one is a workshop on mediation and moderation (by Dr Laura McAvinue), and the second is on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (by Dr Caitriona Kinsella).

Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference

A DHP sponsored Health Psychology symposium entitled 'Psychology and illness: from outcomes to interventions' was convened at the PSI Conference (Sligo) in November 2013 by Frank Doyle. It consisted of five presentations:

- Frank Doyle. Systematic review and meta-analysis of the impact of depression on subsequent smoking in patients with coronary heart disease: 1990–2013
- Catherine Darker. Making it 'Dublin' and 'keeping it real': Development of a brief intervention for illicit drug use and alcohol use in Irish methadone maintained opiate dependent patients
- David Hevey. Increases in positive words and cognitive processing mediate the

effectiveness of expressive writing among myocardial infarction

- Barbara Coughlan. Promoting 'a friendship' as an intervention to support recovery for people with enduring mental health problems: Report of a Randomised Controlled Trial

- Ruth Yoder. Alcohol abuse following bariatric surgery: systematic literature review resulting in change of clinical practice.

Conference bursaries

The DHP Committee approves conference travel bursaries (to a max. of €1,500 per annum) towards costs for UK or European health psychology conferences.

Training in Health Psychology

Ireland now offers a PSI-accredited MSc in Health Psychology at NUI Galway (back-dated to 2007); a BPS accredited MSc at University of Ulster; and a 4-year structured PhD in Psychology and Health at NUI Galway.

Further developing health psychology training in Ireland is a priority for the PSI DHP. Molly Byrne established and has chaired a 'Working Group for PSI Guidelines for a Professional Training for Health Psychology Practitioners', which met first on 17th December 2013. The aim of this working group is to develop the PSI guidelines for Professional Training Programmes for Health Psychology Practitioners. Other members are Suzanne Allen, Philippa Coughlan, Catherine Darker, Frank Doyle and David Hevey. A first draft of the 'Guidelines' are close to completion and they will be circulated to members of the DHP for comment. Agreed guidelines will be submitted to PSI council for ratification, hopefully in autumn 2014.

Employment of Health Psychologists

The Health Services in Ireland (the Health Services Executive, HSE) continue to preclude health psychologists from applying for any psychologist position/anywhere in the Irish Public Health Service, despite EU and Department of Health and Children (DoHC, now Department of Health) Directives, DoHC Statements of Equivalence, or the fact that some health psychologists have been and still are employed within the HSE. The PSI DHP continues to lobby on behalf of Health Psychologists to improve the employment prospects of suitably qualified individuals.

New Health Behaviour Change Research Group

Dr Molly Byrne was awarded a Health Research Board (HRB) Health Research Leaders Award and established the Health Behaviour Change Research Group at the National University of Ireland Galway in January 2014. (http://www.nuigalway.ie/psychology/health_behaviour_change_group.html). This fits within the newly formed Health and Wellbeing Research Cluster at NUI Galway.

Fellowship of the EHPS awarded

Professor Ruth Curtis was recently honoured by becoming a Fellow of the European Health Psychology Society, in recognition of her exceptional contribution to health psychology and to the European Health Psychology Society.

Plans for the coming year

12th Psychology, Health and Medicine Annual Conference 2015

The DHP/NIBPS 12th annual 'Psychology,

Health & Medicine' conference will be hosted on 1st April 2015 in University of Ulster, N Ireland.

Celebrating 21 years of Health Psychology at NUI Galway

Plans are currently afoot for 2 one day conferences to mark the 21st birthday celebrations of Health Psychology programmes at NUI Galway. Further details will be posted on the School website in the coming months.



Molly Byrne

*National University of Ireland,
Galway*

molly.byrne@nuigalway.ie