

# **EHPS Annual Report 2016-Norway**

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*National Association:* Norwegian Psychological Association

The Norwegian Psychological Association (Norsk Psykologforening; NPF), established in 1934, is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Norway. The organization is involved in matters concerning a wide range of professional issues, national health policy, psychological services, science and educational policies. More detailed information about the organization (e.g., commitments, main goals and foundational values) can be found at <http://www.psykologforeningen.no/foreningen/english>

Since 2015, the NPF has hosted annual national conferences in clinical health psychology. At the first conference, the NPF introduced a national alliance for clinical psychology in somatic medicine. The aim is to establish nationwide comprehensive health care services with multidisciplinary somatic departments. The aim of these would be to provide holistic patient treatment according to health psychology research and biopsychosocial model through utilization of coordinated approaches from several professions.

The NPF owns the "Journal of Norwegian Psychological Association", which monthly publishes articles of professional and political interest. The journal is read by almost every Norwegian psychologist and psychology student. In addition, it targets group of professionals working in health and social institutions. Jointly with the Nordic Psychologist Association, the NPF is also part owner of "Scandinavian Journal of Psychology".

## **A. Health Psychology in Norway**

In Norway, health psychology has been more oriented towards public health, health promotion, lifestyle and disease prevention than clinical practice. Related to behavioral and psychosomatic medicine, clinical health psychology is concerned with how the use of psychological knowledge can provide better treatment and treatment outcomes for the patient. In the published "Manifesto of Clinical Health Psychology in Norway" (Berge and Lang, 2011), the authors strongly advocate for the further development of this discipline in the country.

Clinical Health Psychology has gradually gained increasing acceptance in the political understanding of how health care should be devised. In 2015, at the second national conference in clinical health psychology organized by Norwegian Psychology Association, the parliament leader for committee on health and care services confirmed political agreement on implementing "hospital plan". According to this, all medical units for children, adolescents and their families are to be provided with comprehensive health care based on multidisciplinary collaboration that integrates medicine and psychology.

In Norway, there is not a separate title of "health psychologist". The title of "psychologist", on the other hand, has been protected since 1973 through the Psychologist Act and later the "Helsepersonell" Act. The title is reserved for those who have completed their graduate university training and are authorized to work with clinical/counseling psychology in terms of patient care. Doctoral graduates in psychology are prevented from adopting this title.

## **B. Education, training and professionalization**

*The University of Oslo (UiO)* has 11 persons working within the purview of health psychology. The UiO offers a bachelor program in psychology with an opportunity to select specialization within this field. Each semester, a research seminar in health psychology is offered at the doctoral level. (<http://www.uio.no>)

*The University of Bergen (UiB)* offers bachelor in health promotion with focus directed towards, among other thing, societal and economic factors affecting health and disease in humans. There is also a master program in Health Sciences: Health promotion and health psychology (<http://www.uib.no>)

*The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)* in Trondheim has a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Psychology. It aims at various issues in psychology, such as the social construction of illness and health, sick leave and changes in working life. A master in psychology offers specialization in health, organizational and communication psychology. In addition, the Department of Psychology offers specialized course in health psychology at higher level. This course is reserved for students who are admitted to professional studies in psychology.

Noteworthy is the fact that the NTNU is the only educational institution in the country which provides a broad introduction to health studies that draw on theoretical perspectives from a wide range of fields within social sciences and humanities such as health psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, philosophy, ethics and history. The master program in Health Science emphasizes health in a holistic perspective including the role of social and cultural context on people's health. (<http://www.ntnu.no>)

*The University of Tromsø (UiT; Arctic University of Norway)* offers a bachelor program in Culture and Social studies with health psychology as an additional course. This master program is characterized by interdisciplinary approaches enabling student to choose the approach of interest in the master thesis. (<http://www.uit.no>)

*Ansgar Theological University College* in Kristiansand offers a bachelor program in health and community psychology with a focus on religion and health. (<http://www.ansgarhogskole.no>)

*The Norwegian Psychological Association: optional program.* NPF offers a training course in a health psychology postgraduate program for psychologists with professional competence in occupational psychology, child and adolescent psychology, family psychology, substance use and dependence psychology, community and general psychology, and adult psychology. The education is also relevant for psychologists who work in mental health care services, NAV (Labour and Welfare Administration) or municipal low-threshold helping services.

## **C. Activities**

Since 2015, the Norwegian Psychological Association annually holds national conferences in clinical health psychology.

## 1. Publications

Publications by members of below listed research groups may be found at noted websites.

## 2. Working groups

### *Oslo University (UiO)*

Research group in health psychology. This group consists of 16 members and its research areas are: changing health habits, intervention research in relation to health problems and sickness absenteeism, sexuality and sexual habits, alcohol and other substance use, body image, obesity and bariatric surgery.

<http://www.sv.uio.no/psi/forskning/vi-forsker-pa/helsepsykologi>

### *Bergen University (UiB)*

Clinical psychology research group: Unit of Health psychology and psychosomatic medicine. This group's research areas cover psychosocial aspects in the prognosis and rehabilitation of cardiac disease (patients undergoing heart transplantations), pain, and gambling. The group collaborates with Rikshospitalet in Oslo.

<http://www.uib.no/en/rq/fkp/43859/thematic-units>

*HEMIL Centre.* The HEMIL Centre at the Faculty of Psychology was established at UiB in 1988, and has operated since 2010 as a separate Department of Health Promotion and Development. HEMIL conducts interdisciplinary research in the fields of health promotion, child protection, gender and development. Under the auspices of the World Health Organization, HEMIL has responsibility for the international data bank providing open access to data on adolescent health collected in 41 countries. This data provides information on self-reported health, health behavior, life satisfaction and psychosocial environment at school and in family relationships.

<http://www.uib.no/en/hemil>

### *Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)*

*Department of Psychology.* Here the Occupational Health Psychology and Health Promotion research group focuses on health promotion within work settings. The main research topics include improvements of health and well-being, work-related stress, and absenteeism.

*Department of Psychology.* The Adult Clinical Psychology Research Group conducts clinical research on various psychological disorders among adults. It also focuses on disease prevention, mental health promotion, the relation between psychological and somatic health, resilience, therapeutic alliance, cancer, heart disorder and coping, and relation between psychological factors and chronic pain disorders.

<https://www.ntnu.no/psykologi/forskning>

*NTNU Center for Health Promotion Research (CHPR).* NTNU Center for Health Promotion Research has several collaborating institutions involving multiple disciplines. The center consists of researchers with a wide range of research backgrounds; health sciences, movement science and physiotherapy, nurse sciences, occupational science, medicine, physiotherapy, psychology and sport science. The main goal for the Center's work is to

contribute to high quality research and to provide for educational programs to improve the practitioners' understanding of health maintenance and health development. The research areas cover working life, education and upbringing, living environment and health care services. The salutogenic approach focusing on personal and environmental resources (rather than deficits) combined with biopsychosocial perspective on health are at the heart health promotion research.

<https://www.ntnu.edu/chpr>

*Universitetet i Tromsø (UiT; The Arctic University of Norway)*

Health psychology research group. This group consists of 5 members who engage in a number of specialized studies in following research areas: sleep and sleep related health problems, pain, obesity, physical activity, subjective health complaints, anxiety and depressive ailments, use of drugs, health-related behavior (e.g., eating behavior and disorders), validation of standardized instruments in health psychology research, health economics, group based psychotherapeutic treatment of trauma, digital approach in treating social anxiety, stress management among refugees, and sexual habits (e.g., diseases and infections).

Using meta-analysis methodology, the research group aims to engage in joint projects related to the true size of effectiveness of various prevention measures, treatment modes and variability in treatment effects on psychosocial functioning in victims of sexual abuse, quality of life or subjective health among elderly, gastric and plastic surgery.

In collaboration with the Psychiatry research group (IKM), the group engages in project investigating the "Causes and mechanisms in dropping out of high school."

[https://www.uit.no/forskning/forskningsgrupper/sub?p\\_dokumentert\\_id=345697&sub\\_id=346131](https://www.uit.no/forskning/forskningsgrupper/sub?p_dokumentert_id=345697&sub_id=346131)

### **3. Future activities and initiatives**

The National Conference of Clinical Health Psychology in 2017, which is to be organized by the Norwegian Psychological Association, will address the following topics:

1. Diseases of the stomach and intestines
2. Children and young people in hospital
3. Consequences of serious illness: pain, fatigue and sleep problems
4. Palliative care
5. Cancer
6. Psychologist role in clinical health psychology

Each theme includes a list of lectures and workshops focusing on specific clinical methods.