

## **ESCAP Research Division Summary Istanbul May 2018**

The Research Division had its major focus on the preparation and second meeting of the Research Academy from July 9 to 11 (2017) just prior to the opening of the 17th International Congress of ESCAP in Geneva. The 2-day meeting was organized and chaired by Paul Klauser (Geneva, Switzerland), Alexis Revet (Toulouse, France) and Professor Johannes Hebebrand.

The meeting titled “Development after early life adversity” looked into both the acute and long-term effects of child deprivation and abuse (see Revet et al., 2017a). The topic was chosen because of its implications for almost all psychiatric disorders and cognitive and emotional functioning. Five internationally renowned lecturers, three with an expertise in childhood traumatology were invited to present their work with a special highlight on research methodology, thus rendering attendance well worthwhile for early career investigators, even if they were not directly involved in research related to early life adversity. In his introductory lecture, Professor Edmund Sonuga-Barke (London, United Kingdom) provided an in-depth insight into the results of longitudinal studies based on the English and Romanian adoptee project. A lecture from Professor Gordon Harold (Brighton, United Kingdom) introduced novel research designs to ‘disentangle’ genetic from early rearing influences on children’s psychopathology. Professor Johannes Hebebrand (Essen, Germany) provided an overview of important findings from genetic studies and discussed their implications from both a clinical and research perspective. Advantages and disadvantages of animal models for early stress were discussed by Professor Carmen Sandi (Geneva, Switzerland). Lastly, Professor Doron Gothelf (Tel Aviv, Israel) highlighted common pitfalls on the pathways from an idea to a research design.

Twenty-three young researchers (in training or within 5 years after board certification, psychiatrists and psychologists working with child and adolescent mental health) were selected among the most promising applicants. In total, 18 European countries, including Romania, Czech Republic, Greece, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Austria, Finland, Norway, Serbia, Spain, Croatia, Macedonia, Italy, Turkey, Switzerland and France, as well as two non-European countries (i.e. Israel and Australia) were represented.

All early career investigators outlined their personal background, their main topics of interest as well as their ongoing research projects. Working groups led by the invited experts were set up according to the major topics of the meeting and allowed an intensive exchange between five to six early career investigators and the respective expert. The workshop topics included genetic, environment, genetics x environment, and animal models in the field of childhood adversity, with group results presented to all participants at the final session of the meeting.

The Research Academy meeting provided an exceptional opportunity for participants to gain contemporary theoretic and scientific information on the subject of early life adversity and related topics in child and adolescent psychiatry, through lectures and group work. It also enabled participants to build up scientific skills through fruitful discussions with distinguished international experts and through teamwork. Furthermore, it facilitated establishing an international network of young scientists in the field of child and adolescent mental health and setting the ground for their future scientific cooperation. The sessions were particularly informative and interactive, providing abundant insights and ideas, led by enthusiastic approach of lecturers who were open to discuss and advice on each individual participant's scientific pathway and questions of interest. This type of approach provided a valuable and unique opportunity for individualized, high-quality early career mentoring in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry.

The early career investigators hooked up after the meeting to come up with an editorial for *European Child + Adolescent Psychiatry* (Revet et al., 2017b), which addressed the difficulties inherent to a dual training as clinician-scientist. All child and adolescent psychiatrists and psychologists who had attended the Research Academy, worked together to discuss these crucial issues, which have a direct impact on the future of the academic discipline child and adolescent psychiatry in Europe.

There are several interesting points to be addressed in the future research: Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD) has been introduced in DSM-5 as a novel diagnosis and only limited research is currently available. There is a confusion

amongst terminology, the measurement of irritability in DMDD is still controversial. The overlapping and determining distinctions between ADHD, severe mood dysregulation (SMD), bipolar disorder and DMDD needs to be explored. The prevalence of non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) among adolescents has been increasing - much of the existing research has focused on nonclinical samples of adolescents and young adults, assessment tools for NSSI have been limited in scope. In the future, we suggest to have more nationwide cohort studies, along with multicentric studies, which will help in overcoming disparities and better understanding common mental health issues in children and adolescents. Special focus should be on psychosocial influences and interventions, along with research on psychotherapy and psychosocial intervention, which are somehow underdeveloped in comparison to contemporary trends in genetics and pharmacotherapy.

Johannes Hebebrand in his dual position as Head of the ESCAP Research Division and Editor-in-Chief of *European Child + Adolescent Psychiatry* also helped to compile two special issues of the Journal. The first issue (Editors: Nanda Lambregts-Rommelse [Nijmegen, The Netherlands] and Johannes Hebebrand) focused on the role of nutrition in child and adolescent onset mental disorders. The second special issue (edited by Matthew Hodes [London, United Kingdom], Dimitris Anagnostopoulos [Athens, Greece], Norbert Skokauskas [Trondheim, Norway]) was devoted to epidemiological, diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic issues related to the recent influx of migrants/refugees into Europe (Hodes et al., 2018a and b).

## References

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