"Express Rather than Impress": Discussing Challenges in a Peer-group of Early Career Researchers

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Rationale:
Early career researchers face many challenges—such as securing funding, establishing peer collaborations, dealing with doubts and uncertainty concerning research and methods, and identifying career trajectories—and benefit from discussing these topics with peers. Since 2011, the early career network (yEACH) has coordinated workshops that bring together early career researchers to discuss these challenges and provide constructive advice. Based on literature on early career challenges and feedback from previous attendees, we propose conducting a workshop at ICCH 2016 that focuses on methodological challenges, career development, and networking.

Learning Objectives:
1) Master the principles of peer-to-peer support in research and career development.
2) Share and receive constructive feedback on research and career challenges.
3) Develop networking skills and build international support networks.

Teaching Methods:
We will promote the workshop to early career ICCH registrants through social media, e-mail lists, senior researchers, and (with permission) ICCH registration lists. We will ask workshop participants to register in advance, and all participants will be asked to submit a short description of their current challenges before the workshop. We will ask participants to select a focus area, and we will use these areas to organize participants into small groups.

Small group focus areas may include:
1) Research/Methods: Challenges related to ongoing research projects and methodology.
2) Career Development: Challenges related to career (e.g., mentorship, work-life balance, job seeking/transitions).
3) Networking: Challenges related to networking with others (e.g., developing "elevator speech," identifying collaborators).

Workshop Agenda (90 minutes):
- Introductions and overview of peer feedback (10 minutes).
- Division into small groups (3-4 people), each facilitated by one workshop organizer. Participants explain challenges within small groups, constructively discuss problems, and brainstorm solutions (70 minutes).

- Reconvene as large group to discuss lessons learned and future peer-to-peer support activities (10 minutes).

Teaching Materials
- Slides (PowerPoint)
- Flip-over charts

Evaluation:
Participants will complete a short electronic evaluation at the end of the workshop.

Number of Participants:
Maximum 16 early career researchers (within first 10 years of research careers). Participants must register in advance.