

THE 16TH BERLIN SUMMER SCHOOL - PSYCHIATRY AS A SCIENCE AND AS A PROFESSION: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, EXERCISE AND MENTAL DISORDERS

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The 16th Berlin Summer School entitled "Psychiatry as a Science and as a Profession: Physical activity, exercise and mental disorders", organized by the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Charité University of Medicine in Berlin in collaboration with the Association for the Improvement of Mental Health Programmes and supported by the Berlin School of Mind and Brain, Humboldt University, took place between the 28th August and the 2nd September 2016 in Berlin, Germany and was led by Prof. Dr. Dr. Norman Sartorius, Prof. Dr. Dr. Andreas Heinz and Prof. Dr. Andreas Ströhle.

The program aimed to answer all the basic needs of young psychiatrists and psychologists on acquisition of skills related to research and professional advancement in psychiatry. Based on a brief CV with list of publications, a motivation letter, a certificate of proficiency in English and a letter of recommendation from the head of the department or from the president of the national psychiatric society, were selected 13 applicants from 11 different European countries.

The 16th Berlin Summer School was a wonderful experience, both from a socio-cultural and scientific point of view. This school provided a unique opportunity for psychiatrists and psychologists to share their research in their early careers, to gain new knowledge, to meet prominent figures in the field and grow their network.

The Berlin Summer School improved participants' leadership skills and emerged different ideas for further international collaborations. Attendees presented a variety of up to date and highly interesting topics and

were able to discuss differences between psychiatric systems across Europe.

The most appreciated were the sessions which focused on practical skills, ex. how to write a CV, how to prepare a poster and an oral presentation and how to prepare a paper for publication, extremely valuable information which is very difficult to acquire from elsewhere. Additionally, the participants received updated information on current social issues such as physical exercise and immigration crisis in Europe from a mental health professional perspective. The organizational support provided to the participants was outstanding with excellent logistic support, as well as accommodation and visiting arrangements.

The Summer School provides an intensive postgraduate training for young psychiatrists and psychologists and improves the practical skills that can be followed by a greater involvement in research projects or in similar educational courses. Although the Berlin Summer School is limited to six days of intensive training, it has a major positive impact on the career of every participant. The social and networking activities of the school are valuable aspects and we consider that has created a base for many years of friendships and collaboration.

Spreading the organization of the summer schools and the postgraduate courses in Europe and around the world is an effective way to develop the professional skills of young psychiatrists and psychologists, to develop friendships and an international research network for an increase in psychiatric research worldwide.

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Conflict of interest:

All authors were participants at the 16th Berlin Summer School.

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