

Synergy: “The Times They Are a-Changin’”

Sinéad Moylett

Belgium

Anne van Dongen

Netherlands

Alicia Hughes

UK

Hannah Durand

UK

James Green

Ireland

Marie Kotzur

UK

Dominika

Kwasnicka

Australia

Jan Keller

Germany

Sebastian Potthoff

UK

and Liaison Officer and Secretary respectively. Anne was involved in Synergy as Secretary from 2014 to 2016. After spending some time in Australia as a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Anne re-joined the board in 2020 as Engagement Officer, before becoming a Chair when the then-Chair (Dominika Kwasnicka) joined the EHPS EC. Anne is also in the EHPS Mentoring Committee Task and Finish group, and is a National Editor of the Practical Health Psychology blog. She is an assistant professor at the University of Twente at the Department of Psychology, Health, and Technology. She earned her doctorate in Health Psychology from the University of Maastricht in the

Synergy: Board

2021 is bringing a number of changes to SYNERGY with new members joining, past members returning to steer the ship, and a slight rebrand to better encapsulate our board positions.

Continuing members

Anne van Dongen, Sinéad Moylett and Alicia Hughes will continue on as part of Synergy. Sinéad and Alicia will stay in their positions of Grant

Netherlands and completed a second postdoctoral position after returning from Australia, in the University of York, UK. Anne’s research interests include consolidation of frameworks to design (digital) behaviour change interventions; equality in healthcare; the organisation, delivery, and evaluation of complex health interventions; long-term maintenance of health behaviour change; and emotion regulation interventions.

Alicia is a Postdoctoral Researcher in Psychological Medicine at King’s College London, a chartered Health Psychologist and Higher Education Academy teaching fellow. Alicia’s research explores trans-diagnostic approaches to persistent physical symptoms. She studies a range of long-term conditions and has a special interest in factors which maintain and perpetuate fatigue. Alicia’s research builds upon her PhD exploring the role of attention and interpretation processes in symptom perception and symptom experience. She has expertise in epidemiological and experimental research methods, and designing behaviour change interventions.

Sinéad is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Laboratory of Neuroimmunology, KU Leuven, Belgium with expertise in big healthcare data, epidemiology, and bioinformatics. Previously, she has held two postdoctoral roles in epidemiology for public health in the UK: Cardiff University and the University of Cambridge. Her postdoctoral roles have been greatly complemented by a PhD in Health Psychology from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. Within her current position, she is in charge of key genetic, immunological, and multi-omics analyses trusted to the Belgian group for a Horizon2020

project, MultipleMS, which utilises genetic, lifestyle, clinical, imaging, and DMT response data from unprecedented large multiple sclerosis (MS) cohorts in 21 centres across Europe and the US to identify stratified patient populations to develop novel personalised medicine approaches. With her statistical proficiency in longitudinal analyses assessing disease development and progression from healthcare data, Sinéad's research interests lie in how big healthcare data can be harnessed most efficiently in order to assist not only the wider population but in particular, diverse disease groups and the additional burdens these groups face throughout their disease course.

New members

Synergy is delighted to welcome three new board members this year. Hannah Durand has become our new Engagement Officer. James Green will take over as Treasurer following Jan Keller and Marie Kotzur will become our new Evaluation and Dissemination Officer following Sebastian Potthoff.

Hannah is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher at the School of Psychology, National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway. She was recently appointed to the position of Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Stirling, Scotland, which she will undertake from August 2021. Her research addresses self-management of chronic illness across the lifespan, in particular treatment adherence and pain management. She completed her PhD on the topic of medication adherence for apparent treatment-resistant hypertension in primary care at NUI Galway in 2018. Most recently she led a series of studies exploring adherence to physical distancing measures in response to COVID-19 in Ireland. She is a recipient of the Herman Schaalma Award of the European Health Psychology Society (2020), the Early Career Award of the International Society of Behavioral Medicine (2018), and the Pain Research Medal of the Irish Pain Society (2015, 2020).

James is a Chartered Health Psychologist and

Senior Lecturer with the School of Allied Health, University of Limerick, Ireland. He uses insights from psychology to explore health related behaviours and communication. Previously he spent 12 years teaching communication skills and health behaviour change at the University of Otago, New Zealand. He retains an interest in social pharmacy research, interprofessional education, communication between health professionals, adherence to medicines, and understanding how people respond to symptoms in everyday life. Despite a strong quantitative background, he also uses qualitative and mixed methods in his research, much of which has been culturally located, looking at experiences of ethnic minorities or people living in low and middle income countries.

Marie is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Glasgow with a background in health psychology and behavioural science. Her work focuses on the prevention and early diagnosis of cancer through increased screening participation, and she is passionate about reducing inequalities in preventive health care and cancer outcomes. Since joining Glasgow University in 2015, she has been working on several projects to understand barriers to cancer screening participation and to support people in using cancer screening services. Increasingly, her research involves collaboration with underserved groups such as socio-economically deprived groups, ethnic minorities, and people with intellectual disabilities. She has been a member of EHPS since 2014 and cherishes the connections she has been making since then with colleagues globally at EHPS conferences, CREATE workshops and Synergy meetings.

Leaving members

Synergy is sad to see Jan Keller, Sebastian Potthoff and Dominika Kwasnicka (Dom) finishing up their time with us. All have given tremendously to Synergy and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Dom is a Research Fellow in Digital Health at the

Nossal Institute for Global Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, at the University of Melbourne. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Poland. She is a behavioural scientist with diverse interests in health psychology, digital health and research methods focusing on individuals.

Jan currently works as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Division of Health Psychology, Freie Universität Berlin. His research aims to gain more insights about the role of social exchange processes and habit formation for health promotion. In several studies, most of them randomized controlled trials, he evaluated health behaviour change interventions in the context of physical activity, healthy nutrition, and hygiene behaviours.

Sebastian is a Chartered Health Psychologist and Lecturer at Northumbria University whose research focuses on the intersection of Health Psychology and Implementation Science. In his research he draws upon theories and approaches from health psychology to develop and evaluate interventions aimed at changing healthcare professional behaviour and health behaviours of patients and the public.

Synergy: Expert Meeting 2021

Every year, Synergy organizes an annual Expert Meeting (EM) on a topical and cutting-edge issue within the field of health psychology, giving leading experts the opportunity to spend two days working in-depth on the topic and to provide advancements to the field in the form of a research output (e.g. article, policy guidelines, taxonomies and frameworks). This year will be no different. Our previous Chair, Dom will return with Robbert Sanderman to facilitate an online EM titled 'Open Digital Health accelerating health promotion and treatment during and after the COVID-19 pandemic'. This EM aims to promote the use of digital health tools across countries and contexts by creating a

community of digital health scientists to collaborate on sustaining digital health tools. The SYNERGY EM will provide an opportunity to expand the digital health network, to contribute to building a searchable database to identify digital tools and to further define concepts and processes. Every year we welcome a Local Organiser into Synergy. We have had the opportunity to get to know Nikola Vorelova over the past two years as the conference format has changed given the current situation. Nikola is a PhD student at the Institute of Applied Psychology, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia.

The 2021 online conference will be an interesting testing ground to move several of Synergy's events online and will allow us to increase our potential for future online events. An advantage of this year's online conference will be that EHPS events will be more accessible and affordable for participants allowing a greater range of students, academics and lay people to partake. At the same time, being a subdivision primarily focussed on networking, the challenge will be keeping the informal, supportive, and friendly atmosphere Synergy is known for. The Synergy board is currently working hard to organise the online structure and format to best achieve this. Our aim is to increase communication and collaboration not just at the Synergy EM but with other EHPS groups (e.g. CREATE, Special Interest Groups, the Mentoring Task and Finish Group, and the Executive Committee). The Synergy board is looking forward to the challenge and excited for what will be learnt.



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