

# Delegate feedback about the 2011 Conference of EHPS, Crete, Greece



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The 2011 Conference of EHPS took place in September, in the city of Hersonissos, Crete, Greece. It was hosted by the University of Crete, and the Hellenic Psychological Society. The overarching theme of the Conference was *Engaging with*

*Other Professions: Challenges and Perspectives*, underscoring the importance of inter-professional dialogue in health psychology and public health. The EHPS expresses our gratitude to the local organizers for their hospitality and a very successful conference!

After the conclusion of the conference, the EHPS Executive Committee asked delegates to evaluate different aspects of their visit and participation in the 2012 EHPS annual event. Last year we developed an on-line evaluation survey, and are very grateful to Natalie Schüz and Manja Vollmann for setting up the on-line technology and processing the data. Here are some of the results of the feedback we received from the delegates of the 2011 EHPS Conference:

This year, we received feedback from 455 delegates, which is half of the registered delegates. Of those completing the survey, 42.6% were EHPS members and 54.5% were not members, which is almost identical to the distribution for the 2010 Conference evaluation.

The overall quality of the conference was well evaluated, with 14.3% of the delegates stating it was good, 54.7% stating it was very good, 25.9% that it was excellent. On a 5-point scale, the quality of the symposia was rated as 4.17, of the keynote lectures as 4.05, and the quality of oral

presentations as 3.93, chairing and moderation as 4.17 and poster presentations as 3.65. The overall time schedule was rated as 4.11, the conference venue received the highest rating of 4.40, and the social program of 4.16.

The extent to which the conference included a wide range of theoretical approaches received 3.90, theoretically based interventions 3.90, range of methods 3.8, provision of opportunities to meet colleagues, 4.3. Regarding the scope of theoretical and methodological approaches represented, in the open ended questions there were comments regarding low representation of qualitative methodologies and calls for expanding such representation in the future. For the 2010 conference the Scientific Committee had decided to have poster sessions without poster presentations. After that conference, half of the 2010 respondents stated that they prefer to have poster presentations (50%), while 29.9% stated that they prefer without presentations, and the rest had no preference. Thus, this year the organizers, the SC and the EC decided to have poster sessions with chairs and presentations. This decision was supported by the majority of the delegates this year, who stated that they prefer poster sessions with presentations (58.7%), while 32.5% stated they prefer them without presentations. Quite a few delegates (42.6%) felt that this year there were too many posters in the scientific program, though 53.3% felt they were the right number. This is compared to, for example 4.5% who felt the symposia were too many, 4% who felt they were too few, while 88% felt that they were the right number. Similar percentage of approval was evident for the number of paper sessions (77.5%), workshops (86.2%) and keynote

lectures (83.9%). However, in the open ended question about the poster sessions (to which a substantial 30% of respondents had comments), the prevalent opinion was that there were too many posters, they were set up too close together and it was hard to hear the presentations. Some people recommended that the posters be kept up all day, or that they should be organized in several sessions during the day.

For the 2010 conference the EHPS Executive Committee introduced an on-line only abstract book, in order to save funds and paper. At that time, 55% of 2010 delegates supported the idea of an online only abstract book. We took into account the comments regarding improving information about and access to the on-line abstract book for Crete 2011. This year a larger number of delegates (60%) had accessed the abstract book before the conference. In the suggestions, it was stated that some people did not see the email with the link to the on-line abstract book and that should be made clearer. Recommendations also included to have all the abstracts in one PDF, and to have the link available after the conference also. (Subscribers to Psychology and Health will receive a paper issue of the Supplement with the Abstracts; however, delegates who do not subscribe will not be receiving it).

In response to the open ended question regarding what aspects of the conference would delegates change for the future, some common answers were to reduce the number of papers, and particularly posters – some delegates suggested to increase rejection rates and reduce the number of posters by half, while others felt that too many papers submitted for oral presentations had become posters. Other suggestions were to send information about the on-line abstract book earlier, and to include more diversity of health psychology topics and

methods, as well as to have more presentations in line with the theme of the conference. It was pointed out that there were fewer absent presenters in paper sessions, but too many absent presenters (and chairs) at poster sessions. Quite a few people stated that vegetarian options and fresh fruits and vegetables should be more available at meals.

In response to which aspects of the conference worked well, the responses were very positive, stating that it offered a high quality of presentations, keynote lectures, representation of a diversity of themes including discussion of practical applications, and wide international representation. They liked new tracks, such as “Research Gone Wrong” and “Debate of the Day”. Some comments were:

*Terrific dinner party. The best ever! Great venue. Very good meeting. Thank you!*

*It was a great Conference! Thank you to the organizers for being so professional and skilled in managing such a large conference. The venue was beautiful, the opening ceremony was memorable and we felt very well taken care of.*

*I appreciated the care provided to all participants equally, regardless if we were members of EHPS or not, or a member of committees or not. With this occasion I would like give a big "Thank you" to the organizers for doing everything possible for our comfort, and for introducing us into Cretan culture as well. I want to thank the Organizers for inviting all of us at the closing dinner, for choosing an excellent place for it, for giving a varied menu for lunch from which we could freely choose, and for providing buses... all of this included in the Conference fee. The organizers showed respect for all of us. And you all have my respect. Waiting for the next Cretan Conference.*

*Well-organized; friendly atmosphere, providing and stimulating contact with other attendants.*

*I thought the conference was an overall success. The venue was excellent and everything seemed to run very smoothly.*

Thank you for participating in the Conference evaluation! The EC is taking all comments into consideration and will bring recommendations forth to the future EHPS conferences. ■