



ENTER Young Researchers' Webinar 2024 :4

Presenter Bios

21st November 2024, 5pm to 7pm (CET)

Speaker 1: Dr Ismael Bechla

Research fellow at IHRIM (UMR 5317, CNRS).

Title: Some of the challenges of a participatory action research in mental health

Abstract: In the field of mental health research, the involvement of individuals with personal experience of psychiatric care raises questions about the relationship between experiential, qualitative and medical knowledge. Since the early 2000s, mental health researchers have been required to consider the perspectives of the individuals they are studying (Charlton, 1998). What are the factors that facilitate or impede the implementation of a participatory interdisciplinary approach to mental health?

The paper presents the findings of a PhD thesis in mental health anthropology, conducted in a mental health care facility, namely the 'Lieu de répit' in Marseille. The project was supported by participatory action research. Throughout the five-year research period, there was always at least one individual with a history of psychiatric treatment present at the meetings. The involvement of a peer researcher brought to light the interests and limitations in terms of epistemic injustices (Godrie, 2019). The objective of action research is to generate scientific knowledge, enhance awareness of political issues (Freire, 2021) and facilitate social change. However, disparities persist in the analysis of data and dissemination of knowledge. Some tasks are performed solely by research professionals. In other words, experiential knowledge is essential to psychiatric research (Bueter, 2019), but the presence of former psychiatric users necessitates practical, methodological and ethical adjustments. Engaging in participatory research requires reflection on the social positions of those involved and an assessment of the quality of participation by those directly concerned.

Biography: I'm mental health anthropologist and I defended my thesis in 2023, entitled "Accueillir la crise psychique. Expérimentation et expérience du rétablissement" (Welcoming psychological crisis. Experiments and experiences of recovery). The field of my participant observation is an innovative non-medicalised alternative to hospitalisation for mental health crises (Soteria model). My research focuses on the history of alternatives to hospitalisation in psychiatry, participatory action research in mental health, experiential knowledge, peer support and the experience of crisis for those directly affected and those around them.



Speaker 2: Iris Dežman Burazer

Senior researcher & Doctoral Student at the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Research and Project Department.

Title: The use of ICT in social work with young people

Abstract: The relationship between social work and technology has historically been complex, with technology often being viewed with skepticism in the field. However, evolving social work practice demands innovative approaches, particularly in mental health support for young people who are the most numerous users of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This is especially significant as research shows young people are increasingly reluctant to seek traditional mental health support, while being more comfortable with digital communication channels.



My research study combines qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how ICT impacts the helping process in social work with young people. The study has progressed through multiple phases, including a comprehensive national survey of social workers in Slovenia working with young people, focus group discussion with social workers, ongoing implementation and monitoring of ICT use in social work practice, collection of feedback from both practitioners and young service users.

Preliminary findings suggest that integrating ICT into social work practice can bridge communication gaps between social workers and youth, whose communication patterns have been significantly shaped by digital technology. The research particularly focuses on how ICT can support the establishment of relationships and enhance accessibility to mental health support while maintaining professional standards and ethical considerations.

The study contributes to understanding how social work practice can adapt to meet the communication preferences of young people while maintaining professional effectiveness in help and support. Final results, including upcoming in-depth interviews, will provide insights into developing evidence-based guidelines for ICT integration in youth mental health social work practice.

Biography: I'm a social worker focused on bringing digital innovation to social services. After working at a crisis centre for children and youth, I've turned to researching the use of ICT in social work with young people. I'm now pursuing my doctorate and working as a researcher at the Social Protection Institute of Slovenia on digitalizing long-term care. Beyond work, I love to travel and spend time with family.

Speaker 3: Pierre Ricono

Doctorate student, Writer.

Title: The use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) among cancer patients: a possible way to get a better mental health.

Abstract:

Cancer is synonymous with extreme emotions, due to the traumatic context of the disease and its uncertain outcome. Often conventional treatment is experienced as an illness in its own right, due to the wide range of the adverse effects, which can damage bodies, to a point where the person may no longer recognize themselves.

In the face of physical and mental suffering, psychological support, psycho-oncology (Suissa 2017) and guidance are also important in coping with anxiety, stress and loneliness. Some patients choose to turn to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) to combat this mind-body discomfort and do their bit to get better and gain a sense of empowerment and consequently restore morale and hope.

My thesis is based on participation in the MAC' EVAL study (<https://ichgcp.net/clinical-trials-registry/NCT03954509>). This research conducted at Saint Joseph Hospital in Paris seeks to obtain and analyze the following information:

- i. why types of CAM approaches are used by patients,
- ii. what are their benefits,
- iii. how do patients get information on CAM and what resources do they use,
- iv. who practices CAM
- v. how does patient perceive the role of the hospital and health professionals to develop and secure the use of CAM.

MAC' EVAL focus on CAM that can bring iatrogenic risk (phytotherapy, food supplements, acupuncture, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), homeopathy, essential oils), and the following techniques: hypnosis, sophrology, massages, meditation...

In conclusion, 4 attitudes are observed among cancer patients with regard to their treatments: the allegieants, the agentives, the combatives and the fatalists.

Biography: I retired two years ago after a career in science education and climate emergency. I have an interest in traditional medicines for many years. I have a university degree (DU) in phytotherapy, aromatherapy and naturopathy.

For six years I am a PhD student in educational sciences at Lille University, particularly in studying the perspectives of people diagnosed with cancer, an existential disease,



and how they cope with treatment after the trauma of the diagnosis. I am the author of two books, one on Tibetan medicine (2013) and one on Korean medicine (2015).