



**European Society for Child
and Adolescent Psychiatry**

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The 2022 ESCAP Research Academy Workshop: New Perspectives on Eating Disorders

Since its birth in Madrid in 2015 [1], the ESCAP Research Academy has proven to be a thriving initiative, both for organising biennial workshops (e.g., Geneva 2017 [2], Vienna in 2019 [3]) and for launching collaborative research projects on a European scale. Throughout the years, Research Academy Fellows published research on the clinician-scientist curriculum in child and adolescent psychiatry (CAP) [4], on the diversity of CAP training across Europe (i.e., CAP-STATE study [5]) and more recently on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on CAP services across Europe (CovCAP study [6, 7]). We have also tried our first virtual workshop on innovative treatments during the summer of 2020. This event was successful from a pedagogical and scientific perspective, but the social aspect which are the very spirit of these meetings was very much missing [8].

This year's 2-day meeting, held in Maastricht on June 17–18, 2022, just prior to the ESCAP Congress, was generously hosted by the Maastricht University Medical Center with the help of Cisca Joldersma, Anita Rousch-Senden and Therese van Amelsvoort. The workshop was organised and chaired by Paul Klauser and Alexis Revet, coordinators of the Research Academy, and the Research Academy lead and head of the ESCAP Research Division, Johannes Hebebrand. It gathered 18 promising young Fellows from 12 different countries (Albania, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Lebanon, Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey), selected based on their strong interest in a clinician-scientist career in CAP and their academic profile. The first morning was dedicated to short presentations by the Fellows, including their

curriculum, research topic and plans and aspirations for the future. As in previous editions, we were amazed by the richness of the different training courses as well as the diversity of research projects on eating disorders, which was the main topic for more than half of the Fellows, with others specialising in the neurobiology of autism, abuse among figure skaters, alcohol consumption among migrants, alexithymia in kids, etc.

For the first time, the theme of the workshop was not a novel approach or a methodological field, but a diagnostic category. Four internationally renowned clinician-scientists were invited and generously accepted to present about different aspects of research related to eating disorders. Janet Treasure from London gave the introductory lecture entitled “Compare and contrast rather than transdiagnostic as the new paradigm for aetiological models of eating disorders”. Second, Esther Via Virgili from Barcelona presented on “Neural correlates of eating disorders”. Third, Johannes Hebebrand from Duisburg-Essen presented on “Anorexia nervosa viewed as an aberrant adaptation to starvation: Implications for treatment”. Lastly, Bruno Falissard from Paris concluded on “Epistemological reflections on eating disorders: implications for research and clinical practice through a focus on sex ratio in Anorexia Nervosa (and gender issues in child and adolescent psychiatry in general)”.

The last part of the workshop was structured around group work by the Fellows, supervised by mentors, focusing on the finalisation of the FAiCAP (First Assessment in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry) study, the launch of which had been interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The FAiCAP study aims to: (i) obtain a picture of the heterogeneity of initial assessment practices in Europe (i.e., the first consultation(s)/meeting(s) leading to a formal diagnosis and treatment plan of a child or adolescent during

his/her first contact with a child and adolescent psychiatrist in an outpatient setting); and (ii) make recommendations on how to carry out this initial assessment. This group work and the exchanges that followed made it possible to make significant progress on various points and to envisage the launch of this new European study in September. Finally, Professor Hebebrand concluded the meeting by proposing to the Fellows to reflect on a future European collaborative project on eating disorders.

As usual, the evenings were an opportunity for less formal exchanges. The beautiful terraces of Maastricht helped to facilitate conversation, not only between the Fellows but also with the mentors.

Once again, the ESCAP Research Academy meeting has fulfilled its objectives: to promote excellence in research by encouraging promising young clinician-scientists, to support early career development by providing a forum for sharing experiences with leading CAP experts, and to implement collaborative research projects on a European scale. The next ESCAP Research Academy meeting is scheduled to take place in Copenhagen on 27–28 June, just before the 20th ESCAP International Congress, and is expected to focus on ADHD, with Professor Samuele Cortese as the mentor. More detailed information will be published on the ESCAP website in the last quarter of 2022.

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