

Autumn 2020 | Volume 2
Issue 1

*Re-Connect, Share,
Inspire*

Member Graduations:

Since our last newsletter, the following CCP-YRN members have completed their PhD in Psychology:

- Dr. Shauna Rohner
- Dr. Karin Rechsteiner
- Dr. Nikolai Kiselev
- Dr. Mirëlinda Shala
- Eva Stelzer
- Ningning Zhou

The following Master students have graduated or submitted their final versions:

- Stefan Rohner
- Mariia Merzhvynska
- Tenzin Dotschung
- Lea Christen
- Alexandra Reymond
- Julia Spaaij

Congratulations from everyone in the CCP-YRN team

Dear Young Researchers,

We, the Cultural Clinical Psychology – Young Researchers Network, believe that it is now more important than ever to re-connect, share, and inspire. In this spirit we bring to you our Autumn Newsletter 2020 – enjoy the read!

CCP-YRN team



UZH PhD Thesis titles:

Dr. Shauna Rohner: Stress-Related Resilience in Older Adults with Experiences of Early-Life Adversity

Dr. Karin Rechsteiner: Metaphors Research on Trauma in Cultural Clinical Psychology.

Dr. Nikolai Kiselev: Barriers to Accessing Mental Healthcare for Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Switzerland.

Dr. Mirëlinda Shala: Kulturelle Anpassung von Hap-pas-Hapi: Eine Internet- und Smartphone-basierte Selbst-hilfe-Intervention zur Behandlung psychischer Belastung für albanisch-sprachige Migrant*innen in der Schweiz und in Deutschland.

COVID, Culture, and Grief

By Dr. Clare Killikelly

November 3, 2020

2020 has been an unforgettable year. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted personal and professional life, placed academic ambitions on hold and shrouded research practice in anxiety. Several journalists, researchers, and clinicians have noted a strong sense of cultural loss, not only due to the death of loved ones, but the restrictions to our everyday lives and the constant sense of threat we face daily. At the same time, a silver lining has revealed the importance of accessible mental health services provided by key workers such as psychologists, new large-scale international research collaborations on isolation, grief, and loss, and the discovery of the importance of connection with others and cultural rituals during a crisis. Below are a sample of interesting recent articles exploring these themes.

<https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>

Duan, L., & Zhu, G. (2020). Psychological interventions for people affected by the COVID-19

epidemic. *The Lancet. Psychiatry*, 7(4), 300-302.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(20\)30073-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30073-0)

O'Mahony, S. (2020). Mourning our dead in the covid-19 pandemic. *BMJ (Clinical Research Ed.)*, 369, m1649. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m1649>

Holmes, E. A., O'Connor, R. C., Perry, V. H., Tracey, I., Wessely, S., Arseneault, L., Bullmore, E. (2020). Multidisciplinary research priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic: a call for action for mental health science. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 7(6), 547-560.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(20\)30168-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30168-1)

Personality and Mental Health in Namibia (PersoNa)

By Dr. Amber Gayle Thalmayer

November 4, 2020

This Swiss National Science Foundation project grant, funded in 2018 to run through 2021, assesses personality structure and of psychological disorders in Namibia. Most psychological research is conducted in Western societies, which include only 11% of the world's population. By testing models in majority-world contexts, we can better establish what is universal and what is more culturally-specific in these domains. We can also establish appropriate measures for use in an African context, to support ongoing local research and treatment efforts.

The grant includes two projects. Both started with quantitative surveys collected from large samples, using a team of local interviewers. After data analysis, qualitative interviews are used to put the survey results into a fuller context.

The first publication from this study, “ǀUsigu: A mixed-methods study of character description in Khoekhoegowab” is in press at the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (available through my website:
<http://people.unil.ch/ambergaylethalmayer/>)

For the second portion of the study, we collected data on psychological disorder symptoms, personality traits, well-being, religiosity, physical health, and demographic characteristics from large samples in Khoekhoe, Oshiwambo and English. Several

manuscripts are underway, and follow-up interviews are being planned.

An Invitation to Interns

There is potential for volunteer interns to join us to help prepare publications on cross-cultural psychometric issues or on the qualitative interviews in 2021. This could include support and mentoring about manuscript preparation and shared authorship, for those looking to increase their research experience and publication record. If interested, please write with a brief description of your prior experience and goals:
ambergayle.thalmayer@unil.ch

New Blog on cross-cultural research at *Psychology Today!*

I warmly invite CCP-YRN members to visit my new blog at *Psychology Today*, which seeks to make findings in cross-cultural psychology accessible to a broad audience:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/one-world-many-minds>.

An initial post addresses the value of cross-cultural psychological research; next will be one on personality differences and similarities across societies.

Mental Health Conception and Stigma among Chilean and Swiss Students – Study Abstract for the CCP-YRN Newsletter

By Jan-Philip Knirsch

November 5, 2020

With the ongoing globalization, mental health professionals are confronted with new challenges. These include fighting mental health stigma on a global level or ascertaining whether and how mental health care needs to adjust to culture-specific demands. To tackle said obstacles, culture-specific aspects (i.e stigma and conception) of mental health and their impact need to be better understood. A study of the University of Fribourg investigated these culture-specific perceptions of mental health and mental health treatment (MHT) in collaboration with their South American colleagues. The aim was to investigate the perception of mental illness (MI) and of mental health treatment (MHT) among young people in a European and a South American country and compare intercultural

differences and potential influencing factors (i.e. collectivism, upbringing conditions).

For this purpose, a total of $n = 312$ Chilean ($n = 153$) and Swiss ($n = 159$) students (age range: 19 to 46 yrs, $M = 22.9$, $SD = 2.9$) were recruited and asked to complete a set of questionnaires assessing stigma and conception of MHT and MI, and potential influencing factors (individualism/collectivism, upbringing conditions(rural/urban), and gender).

First analyses revealed significant group differences in the perceived cause of MI, in individual reasons for attending MHT, in help-seeking strategies to deal with MI and in participants' assumptions about potential helpful conditions to solve psychological issues after controlling for gender and upbringing. Swiss people understood MI development more often as multicausal (i.e internal and external causes) and reasons to attend psychotherapy were less related to collectivism than in Chilean participants. Chileans mentioned more spiritual help-seeking strategies to deal with MI and their assumptions about helpful conditions to solve psychological issues were more related to collectivism and spirituality. MI development was less stigmatized in Swiss than Chilean participants, while Swiss participants showed more negative general attitudes towards psychotherapy.

These preliminary findings provide first insights into culture-related aspects such as stigma and conception of mental health topics and will need consideration by health professionals. Further analyses are needed to prove these preliminary findings.

Authors: Jan-Philip Knirsch¹, Gloria Jiménez Moya², Felicitas Forrer¹, Nadine Messerli¹, Simone Munsch¹

New CCP-YRN Member: Celestin MUTUYIMANA

November 10, 2020

We would like to welcome a new CCP-YRN member and the newest addition to the Division of Psychopathology and Clinical Intervention at the University of Zürich!

¹ Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland



Celestin MUTUYIMANA is a clinical psychologist, psychotherapist, trainer, researcher, and project manager from Rwanda. He worked with communities, especially children, women, and youth, focusing on PTSD intervention and child protection within national and international organizations. He worked as research assistant and tutor at the University of Rwanda and he has been the principal investigator and co-investigator of national studies on PTSD and intergenerational trauma transmission, resilience, and positive parenting. He is the co-founder of Rwanda Psychological Society and member of Rwanda Allied Health Professionals. Currently, Celestin MUTUYIMANA is a PhD student at the Department of Psychology in the University of Zürich, where he conducts a study on the intergenerational historical trauma transmission in survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

Trauma and Resilience in Ireland and Switzerland

By Dr. Shauna Rohner

November 12, 2020



² Escuela de Psicología, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago de Chile, Chile

Some of our CCP-YRN members are involved in the National Research Project (NRP76) “Differential aging trajectories in high-risk individuals with past experiences of early adversity”. It is a multi-study, longitudinal project investigating health and resilience in older adults with childhood experiences of trauma and adversity in both Ireland and Switzerland. The Irish side of the study comprised of a survey and interviews. The first article was published this summer on resilience factors identified in interviews with the Irish survivors of childhood institutional abuse. The study identified a distinct cluster of personal and contextual factors underpinning resilience in this sample. Results support a dynamic concept of resilience that can be understood not only as an inherent trait, but also as a learnable set of behaviours, thoughts, and attitudes, which can be supported by external resources in an older adults’ environment. For more information see the publication by Mc Gee, Maercker, Carr, & Thoma (2020) in the publication list below. Currently we have two very hard-working master students on the Irish study, analysing the data from survivors of childhood familial abuse. Take a look at an insight into their master thesis topics below!



My name is Aileen Salas and in my thesis I am interested in the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and prosocial behaviour in older adults. Looking at the life stories of older adults who experienced adverse situations in childhood, I expect to get an idea of what elements of the adverse childhood experiences could play a role in the development and frequency of prosocial behaviours in a long term. I will examine if and how prosocial behaviour and adverse childhood experiences are related and if the tendency to help others could be some kind of protective factor associated with resilience, a positive effect of the experienced adversities.



My name is Jessica Michel and my topic focuses on disclosure. The oral or written disclosure of traumatic experiences is thought to be an important variable for recovery of trauma-consequences. In my thesis I wish to explore disclosure and how it may relate to overall resilience in survivors of both institutional and familial abuse. By adopting a perspective of the individual, nested within different social, cultural, and interpersonal contexts – all of which the individual interacts with – I hope to contribute to the growing research on disclosure.

The Swiss side of the study involves clinical, psychological, and behavioural assessments with older adults affected by compulsory social measures and placements in childhood and adolescence. This study is currently underway, the baseline data has been collected and the next wave of data collection is scheduled to begin in January 2021. So far in the Swiss study, 2 articles have been published in 2020, investigating: (1) stress, health, and the role of socio-economic factors; and (2) a network analysis of complex interactions of resilience resources and stress-related risk factors. For more information on these articles see the publication list below. A qualitative interview study with the Swiss care-givers of these affected individuals will also be conducted in 2021 and we will soon be offering master theses on this topic. Interested students should keep an eye on the department website

(<https://www.psychologie.uzh.ch/de/bereiche/hea/psypath/Studium/Masterarbeiten.html>) or contact PhD

Candidate Elena Mayorova

(elena.mayorova@psychologie.uzh.ch).

Dr. Mirëinda Shala – Recently completed PhD in cultural clinical psychology

By Dr. Mirëinda Shala

November 13, 2020

Recently I completed my PhD in psychology at the University of Zurich. In addition to my knowledge of cultural studies, I was able to explore the interdisciplinary field of cultural clinical psychology. In doing so, I expanded and consolidated my knowledge in qualitative research mainly focused on cultural concepts of distress among Albanian-speaking migrants in Switzerland. Within the scope of my doctoral research project, I was involved in the development and cultural adaptation of a smartphone-based self-help programme for the treatment of psychological distress among Albanian-speaking migrants in Switzerland and Germany. This intervention, called “Step-by-Step” (Albanian “Hap-pas-Hapi”), was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in close collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health in Lebanon, Freie Universität Berlin, and the University of Zurich. I particularly appreciated the cooperation and exchange in our international research team and the networking at conferences, workshops, and meetings. Thus, I was able to gain valuable insights into theories and methods of cultural adaptation of psychological interventions and to work on them in my publications. As a result, articles for my cumulative dissertation have been published in the renowned journals “Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry” and “Internet Interventions”. My PhD was a great opportunity to grow on a professional and personal level through a variety of research activities. Above all, I enjoyed the appreciative atmosphere in our team in the Department of Psychopathology and Clinical Intervention, which gave me the strength to master every challenge in my PhD.

Member Publication List

(CCP-YRN members in bold)

Heim, E., Burchert, S., **Shala, M.**, Kaufmann, M., Cerga Pashoja, A., **Morina, N.**, Schaub, M. P., Knaevelsrud, C., & **Maercker, A.** (2020). *Effect of Cultural Adaptation of a Smartphone-Based Self-Help Programme on Its Acceptability and Efficacy: Study*

Protocol for a Randomized Controlled Trial.

<https://doi.org/10.23668/PSYCHARCHIVES.352>

Höltge, J., **Mc Gee, S. L.**, **Maercker, A.**, & **Thoma, M. V.** (2019). Stealing in later life: Exploring age-specific effects of varying levels of stress on psychological resilience. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*. Advance online publication.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0091415019871202>

Killikelly, C., Ramp M, **Maercker, A.** (2020).

Prolonged grief disorder in refugees from Syria: qualitative analysis of culturally specific symptoms and implications for ICD-11, *Mental Health Religion and Culture* (Accepted September 2020).

Killikelly, Zhou, Merzhvynska, Stelzer, Dotschung, Rohner, Sun, Maercker (2020). Development of the International Prolonged Grief Disorder Scale for the ICD-11: measurement of core symptoms and culture items adapted for Chinese and German-speaking samples, *Journal of Affective Disorders* (accepted August 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.08.057>

Kiselev, N., **Morina, N.**, Schick, M., Watzke, B., Schnyder, U., & Pfaltz, M. (2020). Barriers to access to outpatient mental health care for refugees and asylum seekers in Switzerland: the therapist’s view. *BMC Psychiatry*, 20, 378. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-02783-x>

Kiselev, N., Pfaltz, M., Haas, F., Schick, M., Kappen, M., Sijbrandij, M., De Graaff, A. M., Bird, M., Hansen, P., Ventevogel, P., Fuhr, D. C., Schnyder, U., & **Morina, N.** (2020). Structural and socio-cultural barriers to accessing mental healthcare among Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Switzerland. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 11(1), 1717825. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2020.1717825>

Kiselev, N., Pfaltz, M., Schick, M., Bird, M., Hansen, P., Sijbrandt, M., De Graaff, A. M., Schnyder, U., & **Morina, N.** (2020). Problems faced by Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Switzerland. *Swiss Medical Weekly*, 150, w20381.

<https://doi.org/10.4414/smw.2020.20381>

Mc Gee, S. L., **Maercker, A.**, Carr, A., & **Thoma, M. V.** (2020). “Some call it resilience”: A profile of dynamic resilience-related factors in older adult survivors of childhood institutional adversity and

maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 107, 104565.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104565>

Rechsteiner, K., Maercker, A., Heim, E., & Meili, I. (2020). Metaphors for trauma: A cross-cultural qualitative comparison in Brazil, India, Poland, and Switzerland. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 33(5), 643-653. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22533>

Rechsteiner, K., Tol, V., & Maercker, A. (2019). "It should not have happened": Metaphorical expressions, idioms, and narrative descriptions related to trauma in an indigenous community in India. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 14:1667134.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2019.1667134>

Shala, M., Morina, N., Burchert, S., Cerga-Pashoja, A., Knaevelsrud, C., Maercker, A., & Heim, E. (2020). Cultural adaptation of Hap-pas-Hapi, an internet and mobile-based intervention for the treatment of psychological distress among Albanian migrants in Switzerland and Germany. *Internet Interventions*, 21, 100339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.invent.2020.100339>

Stelzer, E., Höltege, J., Zhou, N., Maercker, A., & Killikelly, C. (2020). Cross-cultural generalizability of the ICD-11 PGD symptom network: identification of core symptoms and culturally specific items across German-speaking and Chinese bereaved. *Comprehensive Psychiatry* (Accepted September 2020).
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsy.2020.152211>

Thoma, M. V., Bernays, F., Eising, C. M., Pfluger, V., & Rohner, S. L. (2020). Health, stress, and well-being in Swiss adult survivors of child welfare practices and child labor: Investigating the mediating role of socio-economic factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 104769.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104769>

Thoma, M. V., Höltege, J., Eising, C. M., Pfluger, V., & Rohner, S. L. (2020). Resilience and stress in later life: A network analysis approach depicting complex interactions of resilience resources and stress-related risk factors in older adults. *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience*, 14:580969.
[doi:10.3389/fnbeh.2020.580969](https://doi.org/10.3389/fnbeh.2020.580969)

Thoma, M. V., Höltege, J., Mc Gee, S. L., Maercker, A., & Augsburg, M. (2019). Psychological characteristics and stress differentiate between high from low health trajectories in later life: A machine learning analysis. *Aging and Mental Health*, 24(7), 1098-1107.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2019.1584787>

Thoma, M. V., & Mc Gee, S. L. (2019). Successful aging in individuals from less advantaged, marginalized and stigmatized backgrounds. *Clinical Psychology in Europe*, 1(3), e32578.
<https://doi.org/10.32872/cpe.v1i3.32578>

Organizing Committee

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