



EUROPEAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION



Eurohealth

PRESS RELEASE

MOU signed between the European Institute of Women's Health (EIWH) and the European Psychiatric Association (EPA)

The EIWH and the EPA will work together on issues concerning gender and mental health

IRELAND and FRANCE, February, 2023 – In November 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the European Institute of Women's Health (EIWH) and the European Psychiatric Association (EPA), formalising their cooperation on the topic of gender and mental health.

Why Gender and Mental Health?

The intersection of gender and mental health represents a key priority area in research and policy. "It is important to raise awareness on gender-sensitive aspects related to mental health. In general, women have a higher risk to develop a mental health disorder compared to men, and they are usually more exposed to anxiety and depression" said Prof. Dr. Peter Falkai, President of the European Psychiatric Association.

A gender-sensitive approach is needed in health research and policy as:

- Mental health conditions can manifest differently in men and women.
- Drugs, treatments and prevention methods can affect men and women differently due to biological and social differences.
- Due to the gender pay gap and the over-representation of women in lower paid, less secure and informal occupations, women generally have less access to resources. This can impact their risk of mental health problems whilst also limiting their access to diagnosis and treatment.
- Women are the main the caregivers and perform the majority of household chores. In the EU 80% of care is provided informally (unpaid) and 75% of informal carers are women¹. Therefore, women have less time to tend to their own mental health needs.²
- In Europe 20-25% of women suffer from physical violence and more than 10% suffer from sexual violence at least once in their adult lives³. This can have serious mental health implications. Women are three times more likely to suffer from an eating disorder compared to men⁴.

A life course approach is needed when considering gender and mental health. The type and prevalence of mental health disorders can vary due to hormonal changes and life events:

- Half of all mental conditions begin at age 14⁵.
- Around 1 in 5 women experience perinatal depression which can occur during pregnancy and/or post-birth.

¹ EU Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, Report on care services in the EU for improved gender equality, 2018).

² EUFAMI, 'Caring for Carers' Survey results: <https://www.eufami.org/c4c/>

³ Council of Europe, Stocktaking study on violence against women, 2006.

⁴ Across the EU, more than 900 000 adult women (aged over 20 years) suffered from eating disorders in 2019, which is three times higher than for men (317 000) (GBD 2019 data).

⁵ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescents-health-risks-and-solutions>

- Menopause can be associated with depression, anxiety and other mental health conditions.

Next Steps

With their collaboration, the EIWH and the EPA will work together to give visibility to the topic of gender and mental health at EU level and to raise awareness on inequalities, sex and gender differences in mental health. This will be achieved by publishing joint press-releases and articles on the topic of gender and mental health, and by exploring opportunities for developing scientific and project specific collaborations.

“We look forward to working together to highlight these important issues and advocate for improved prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health conditions in women across Europe” noted Peggy Maguire, Director General of the European Institute of Women’s Health.

The EIWH and the EPA Organisations

The EIWH was founded in 1996 and is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that promotes gender equity in public health, research and social policies across Europe. In striving to achieve the highest standard of health for all, policies must recognise that women and men, due to their biological differences, their access to resources and their gender roles, have different needs and are faced with different obstacles and opportunities. This requires a sex and gender sensitive approach. The EIWH uses evidence-based arguments to influence the policy environment. Over the years, the EIWH have worked closely with the European Commission, Member States and the World Health Organisation to place gender mainstreaming on the health and research agenda.

Contact: Twitter @EIWH Email: aoibhinn@eurohealth.ie Find us on: www.eurohealth.ie

Founded in 1983, the EPA is a non-profit association that deals with psychiatry and its related disciplines, focusing on the improvement of care for the mentally ill as well as on the development of professional excellence. With active individual members in as many as 88 countries and 44 National Psychiatric Association Members who represent more than 78,000 psychiatrists, the EPA is the main association representing psychiatry in Europe. The EPA’s activities address the interests of psychiatrists in academia, research and practice throughout all stages of career development.

Contact: Twitter @Euro_Psychiatry Email: epa.brussels@europsy.net Find us on: www.europsy.net

###