
Monika M. MAŁKIEWICZ1, Jan F. TERELAK2

1 Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Institute of Psychology, Warsaw, Poland
2 Military Institute of Aviation Medicine in Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

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Author’s address: M.M. Małkiewicz, Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Institute of Psychology, Dewajtis 5 Street, 00-001 Warsaw, Poland, e-mail: m.malkiewicz@uksw.edu.pl

The 37th International Conference organized by the Stress and Anxiety Research Society (STAR) took place on 6-8th of July in Zagreb, Croatia.

The aim of the annual STAR conferences is the presentation of and discussion on the new theoretical and practical achievements in the field of stress, anxiety and coping. The conference is attended by international experts and especially by psychologists. The discussed topics often involve current social and political problems. An emphasis is put on presenting research that could contribute to a better understanding of human functioning under difficult conditions, which could have practical implications. The topic of this year’s conference was Stress and Anxiety in a Changing Society.

Among the speakers, there were scientists from 33 countries; 274 investigators presented their research during 12 symposia, 23 topic series and 2 poster series. Polish scientific centers were represented by 21 active participants of whom the majority presented posters. Three presentations were given as part of the topic series by: M. Kaczmarek, M. Leśnierowska, R. Cieślak (Department of Psychology, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw) - “From Neuroticism through Exhaustion and Self-Efficacy Change to Disengagement: New Findings on Job Burnout Development in Firefighters” (co-authors); M. Małkiewicz, J.F. Terelak (Institute of Psychology, Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw) - “The Role of Hope in Coping: Presentation of Lazarus’s Ap-
The conference was opened by chair of the Organizing Committee – Prof. Nataša Jokić-Begić, who remarked on the difficult history of Croatia and the whole Balkan region and underscored that potential sources of stress do not cease to exist with the end of war or social and economic crises. She also noted that currently the processes of globalization, development of new technologies, social changes, requiring from us respect towards diversity and human rights of the individual, are all sources of stress and unrest. In her opinion, new challenges can also bring new possibilities, but this is associated with stress and anxiety. Prof. Jokić-Begić encouraged attendees to think of and discuss the changes that are currently occurring regardless of the world regions from which we come. The opening lecture was given by Brian Hughes, and it was called: “Re-thinking Stress and Anxiety Research: Good and Bad Science in Psychology”. He talked about the quality of scientific work, methodological correctness and an adequate way of drawing conclusions based on research methods applied. He warned from reducing the activities of people to the activity of the cerebral cortex.

Workshops, lectures, oral and poster presentations were intertwined by speeches given by world-famous keynote speakers such as Prof. Ilan H. Meyer (Williams Institute for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law and Public Policy, UCLA’s School of Law, USA), Prof. Nazanin Derakhshan (Department of Psychological Sciences, Birkbeck University of London, UK), Prof. Rita Rosner (Clinical and Biological Psychology, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany) and Prof. Darja Masić Seršić (Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb, Croatia). Moreover, the conference was also attended by other excellent scientists who gave their presentations as part of the topic series. They included Prof. Krys Kaniasty, Prof. Shulamith Kreitler, Prof. Robin Goodwin and Prof. Moshe Zeidner.


A major event of the first day of the conference was the speech given by Prof. Ilan H. Meyer (Williams Institute for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law and Public Policy, UCLA’s School of Law) on stress in sexual minorities. Prof. Meyer presented a model differentiating LGBT people in terms of health status. He focused on social stressors, stigmatization, prejudices and their impact on health. He also presented the newest research in LGBT populations and analyzed the influence of stigmatization of minorities on the legislation in selected countries (Russia, Uganda).


During the second day of the conference, the keynote speakers were Prof. Nazanin Derakhshan (Department of Psychological Sciences, Birkbeck University of London, UK) and Prof. Rita Rosner (Clinical and Biological Psychology, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany).

The subject of Prof. DerrickShan’s presentation was “Emotional Vulnerability and the Road to Resilience”. Prof. DerrickShan started by remarking that according to WHO in the year 2020 depression and anxiety disorders will be the most common causes of abnormal functioning of people. She said that it is difficult to name a specific cause that increases susceptibility to these disorders; moreover, the ef-
During the last day of the conference, the key speaker was Prof. Darja Maslić Seršić whose presentation was entitled “Contemporary challenges of coping with unemployment”. Prof. Maslić Seršić noted that economic recession increased unemployment levels, which had an impact on occupational life of many people in the majority of European countries. Many employees experienced increased expectations at work, higher levels of job insecurity and even loss of employment. The speaker stated that at times of macroeconomic stagnation the above-mentioned stressors contribute to the individual burden of work that is experienced by workers. Moreover, in countries with high levels of unemployment and stagnation (including Croatia), workers are faced with exceptionally high expectations. Subsequently, Prof. Maslić Seršić discussed and compared the results of recent studies, both cross-sectional and longitudinal, in countries with high unemployment and low job mobility. She also emphasized the role of individual cost of adaptation in the process of mandatory job mobility, i.e. of the situation of being intermittently employed and unemployed based on contracts that do not guarantee stability and safety. The conclusions drawn by Prof. Maslić Seršić referred to the theory of the meaning of work and preservation of resources. The speech ended with recommendations on the psychological interventions for three different groups of the unemployed – people who have lost their job recently, people who are unemployed long-term and young unemployed who are new to the job market.

When summing up this year’s STAR conference, it should be noted that in addition to lectures, plenary and topic sessions, there were 7 workshops that focused on psychotherapeutic skills and giving psychological support to people in difficult situations. Moreover, the workshop on the use of the statistical software R was well attended. During the last day of the conference, new board of STAR was elected, which was announced during the closing ceremony. It was also revealed that the next year’s conference will take place in Hong Kong, China.