



MENTAL HEALTH  
KEEP TALKING ABOUT IT

# Newsletter GAMIAN-Europe

August 2016

ISSUE 2016 - 2

**Foreword by**

**Yoram Cohen (President)**

**Welcome to the summer edition of our newsletter!**

Apart from the news contained in this edition, I would also like to inform you of our upcoming Annual Convention, which will take place mid-September in Vienna. This year's Convention will be held in connection with the ECNP conference, and will therefore create opportunities for cooperation and synergies. In addition, we will hold our annual General Assembly and on that occasion a new Board will be elected.

Warm regards,  
*Yoram Cohen, President*

**GAMIAN-Europe's Annual Convention and General Assembly**

*Vienna (Austria)  
15 – 16 September 2016*

**Venue:**

**Mercure Hotel – Fleischmarkt 1a  
1010, Vienna**

**Programme:**

**Thursday 15 September 2016**

Arrival of members  
12:00 – 13:00 Lunch  
13:00 – 15:30 Session 1  
15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break  
16:00 – 19:00 Session 2  
19:30 – 22:00 Dinner, including ceremonies of Pedro Montellano Good Practice Award, announcement of 2016 GAMIAN Europe European Personality Award and Veteran Certificate.

**Friday 16 September 2016**

06:30 – 08:30 Breakfast  
08:30 – 10:30 General Assembly including election  
10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break  
In parallel:  
11:00 – 12:00 Patient Advisory Board meeting on EU research projects

**In this issue**

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Annual Convention and General Assembly</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>World Mental Health Day</b>	<b>2-3</b>
<b>EU News</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>GAMIAN-Europe's News Flash</b>	<b>4</b>

11:00 – 12:00 Part 1 of new Board meeting, election of officers  
12:00 – 13:00 Lunch, presentation of the new Board and new officers  
Departure of members  
13:00 – 15:30 Part 2 of new Board meeting



**World Mental Health Day**  
**10 October 2016**



**DIGNITY IN MENTAL HEALTH**

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Professor Gabriel Ivbijaro MBE JP**  
**President, World Federation for Mental Health**

As the 42nd President of the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) it gives me great pleasure to introduce and commend the theme of 2016 World Mental Health Day to you all. This theme is close to my heart because it continues the Dignity agenda and supports our aim of improving the visibility of mental health worldwide.

Our 2016 theme **'Dignity in Mental Health — Psychological & Mental Health First Aid for All'** will enable us to contribute to the goal of taking mental health out of the shadows so that people in general feel more confident in tackling the stigma, isolation and discrimination that continues to plague people with mental health conditions, their families and carers.

The concept of Psychological and Mental Health First Aid is not new. It dates back to the aftermath of World War II when a process of prevention and management of mild conditions applicable to all individuals was developed in 1945.<sup>1</sup> However, the idea was not universally promoted until much later, probably as a result of mental health stigma.

We know that psychological and mental health first aid is understood differently by different people in the mental health professions and the general public so WFMH wants to develop a shared understanding of basic psychological and mental health first aid that will be understood worldwide by the general public, professionals, governments and non-governmental institutions (NGOs).

### **Our aim is that every member of the general public can:**

- Learn how to provide basic psychological and mental health first aid so that they can provide support to distressed individuals in the same way as they do in physical health crises
- Address the stigma associated with mental ill-health so that dignity is promoted and respected
- Empower people to take action to promote mental health
- Spread understanding of the equal importance of mental and physical health and their integration in care and treatment

- To work with individuals and institutions to develop best practice in psychological and mental health first aid
- To provide culturally sensitive learning materials to increase the skills of the general public in administering psychological and mental health first aid.

Every 40 seconds somebody somewhere in the world dies by suicide, and the young are disproportionately affected. Providing more people with basic Psychological and Mental Health First Aid skills will help to decrease the rate of suicide. Psychological and mental distress can happen anywhere — in our homes, in our schools, in the workplace, on the transport system, in the supermarket, in public spaces, in the military and in hospital. Psychological and Mental Health First Aid is a potentially life-saving skill that we all need to have.

Help mental health come out of the shadows and support WFMH to make Dignity in Mental Health and Psychological & Mental Health First Aid for All a global reality so that we can make the world a better place.

## MAKING THE CASE FOR PATIENTS AND CARERS

**Yoram Cohen**  
**President of GAMIAN-Europe**

### **Key Messages:**

- *Mental health is a matter of increasing importance to us all*
- *Patients and carers should be at the centre of all aspects of healthcare provision and work to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of treatment for all mental health problems*
- *All of us share the same fundamental goal to maximise our well-being*

Mental health is a matter of increasing importance to us all. Everybody knows somebody that has some form of mental health problem. Some of us cope with the ups and downs of life well, while on the other hand, some develop a mental illness. This can happen to any of us; mental health concerns us all.

We want to ensure that patients are at the centre of all aspects of healthcare provision and work to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of treatment for all mental health problems. We believe that there is no health without mental health.

We all share the same fundamental goal which is to maximise the well-being of patients and to generate the

best treatment outcomes possible. The main difference is that from the patient's perspective, the quality of the treatment received is by far the most important consideration – more so than the economic cost of that treatment to the state. Patients view their care in a personal and subjective manner, whereas the establishment is primarily concerned with measurable and empirical findings regarding treatments outcomes.

The personal perspective of patients, as a group and as individuals, is that their values must be taken into account. Patients' needs, beliefs and goals should be considered as the most important element of treatment.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century. It represents a crucial step in the shift from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" requiring medical treatment and social protection to viewing them as "subjects" with fundamental human rights. States which have signed the UNCRPD have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil it. However, there is still a significant gap between the ideals and the reality of how governments and societies treat people with mental health disabilities.

Within the rights of all mental health patients is the right of every individual to be part of the society and in order for inclusion to take place, certain key areas have to be addressed. In order for patients to achieve inclusion, societal attitudes must change, damaging stigmas must be combatted and individuals dealing with mental illnesses must be treated with the priori respect that they are entitled to. Even in terms of mental-health care personnel, awareness of patients' fundamental abilities and rights is often lacking. Living conditions in certain psychiatric hospitals or social care institutions are inadequate.

We still have a long way to go before we fully realise the ideals proclaimed in the UNCRPD. Improvements and developments need to continue to spread across the globe in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration. While it seems that in many areas we are on the right track, there are locations and areas in which many improvements remain to be made. The fight against stigma needs to be embraced on all fronts, also in legislation and national resources. The empowerment approach needs to be further developed, expanded and financially supported in order to give patients the best possible opportunities to live a meaningful life.

The psychological and mental health 'first aid' will be welcomed by mental health patients and their families. Patients themselves will feel more connected to the society and will get first aid when necessary, exactly the same as any other citizen get first aid. Psychological first aid is more human and takes into consideration the individual's needs. The treatment which they will receive

when in need will not be forced upon them but will be more considerate, enabling them to get out of crisis more smoothly.

You can read/download the full report on [our website](#).

## EU News

by Christine Marking (GAMIAN-Europe EU Liaison)



### Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders ‘

A meeting of the European Parliament Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders took place in Brussels on 13 July. The meeting, entitled ‘Mental health and brain disorders: Ensuring joint EU and national level action’ was organised by GAMIAN-Europe in cooperation with the European Brain Council and had the following objectives:

- To raise awareness of the need for specific national action on mental health and brain disorders
- To be informed of the activities of the EBC with respect to National Brain Plans and GAMIAN-Europe's outline for a EU Action Programme on Mental health
- To have an exchange of view between stakeholders on how to ensure that mental health and brain disorders can be further advanced at EU and national levels

Background to the meeting was the fact that the European Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being came to an end in January, resulting in a comprehensive Framework for Action on mental health across the EU. Recommendations for action have been formulated and action is needed to ensure that these recommendations are turned into concrete action.

*Herta Adam* (European Commission, DG Santé) presented the Commission's plans to progress the work on the recommendations emanating from the Joint Action, making use of the Compass on Mental Health and emphasizing the Commission's intention to involve stakeholders in this work.

*Frédéric Destrébecq* (EBC) outlined the background and activities related to the EBC's intention to put in place National Brain Plans across the EU in order to ensure concrete actions in the field of brain disorders. His presentation was complemented by *Marek Plura MEP*, who gave a concrete example of the work on such a national brain plan in Poland.

*Raluca Nica*, speaking on behalf of GAMIAN-Europe, presented her organisation's outline for a concrete

European Action Plan on Mental health, underlining that now is the time for concrete policies and strategies need to be put in place at national level, following the examples of rare disease and cancer.

*Marc Hermans (UEMS)* underlined the need for psychiatry to also include a social dimension and to ensure that this medical specialisation is less stigmatised.

A full report (as well as GAMIAN-Europe's proposal for an EU Action Programme) is available on the [GAMIAN-Europe website](#).



## GAMIAN-Europe's News Flash

**Lundbeck Global Patient Advocacy Summit  
Copenhagen, 27-28 June,  
2016**



Yoram Cohen and Christine Marking represented GAMIAN-Europe at the 2016 Global Patient Advocacy Summit, held in Copenhagen. There were some 60 participants from 30 countries around the world. Having discussions, sharing ideas and networking with other patient advocacy groups were the main activities of the attendees. Subjects of presentations were diverse: the importance of collaboration, online tools to help build a stronger network, creating partnership with other stakeholders, strengthening media engagement, insights from the US patient advocacy, creating disease awareness, establishing alliances to change policy agendas, how to work with social media, fighting stigma and other experiences in this area.

**GAMIAN-Europe was present at the International ISBD ISAD<sup>(\*)</sup> conference 'Challenging Moods' (Conference about Depression and Bipolar Disorders) in Amsterdam on July 13-16, 2016,**



*How to participate in research? Erik Van der Eycken*

\* International Society Bipolar Disorder – International Society Affective Disorders

The event took place at Amsterdam VU University between 13 and 16 July and featured a total of 9 keynote presentations in 4 sessions, some brainstorming

workshops and many parallel symposia. Two poster sessions, in addition to industry satellites and a lively exhibition provided the visitors with useful information about bipolar disorder. As a collaboration of ISBD and ISAD, the conference offered symposia addressing mood disorders as well as symposia focused specifically on bipolar disorder or unipolar major depression alone. Topics included medical and psychiatric co-morbidity, suicide, staging, technology, mood disorders across the lifespan, phenomenology, the gut-microbiome relationship to diet and mood, sleep architecture, treatments (including pharmacological, psychological and self-management) and guidelines.

**THE highlight of the conference for GAMIAN-Europe** was the active participation in the full day advocacy programme on July 16, developed by the Local European Organising Committee in conjunction with the local advocacy groups: the Dutch Association for Bipolar Disorder and Relatives (VMDB), and the Dutch Depression Alliance (Nederlandse Depressie Vereniging).



*Bert Aben of VMDB and Board Member of GAMIAN-Europe*

In the afternoon of this day, GAMIAN-Europe contributed to the session on **PATIENT PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**.

As patients are the ultimate users of research efforts, many funding organisations now require patient-participation as a prerequisite for grant applications. Furthermore, with the development of more professional patient organisations, these ask their members what their research interests and priorities are.

By means of a presentation, Erik Van der Eycken replied to the question 'How to truly participate in research from a pan-European perspective?' You can find all details about the conference programme [here](#)

**Member of the '100 Best Doctors in Hungary'**

Awakenings Foundation is proud to announce that its Director, **Dr. Judit Harangozo** has been selected to be a member of the '100 Best Doctors in Hungary'. She has been fighting for the well-being, recovery and rights of people with mental problems for decades.



***Interested in the final opinion on Access to health services in the EU?*** You can access this document that was developed and published by the Expert Panel on Effective Ways of investing in Health (EXPH), by clicking [here](#). Special attention is being paid to mental health.

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### Upcoming events

***29th ECNP Congress, Vienna (Austria)***  
***17 – 20 September 2016***  
***All details can be found [here](#)***

A specific **patient session** is included in the programme on Saturday 17 September. The patient's perspective will be presented Hilikka Karkkainen (Finland), one of GAMIAN-

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Europe's Board members. You can find more info about this session [here](#)

If you want to participate in this session, please register at [secretariat@expertplatform.eu](mailto:secretariat@expertplatform.eu)

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### ***We speak a lot of mental health, but what is mental health?***

It involves our emotional, psychological, and social well-being, and it affects how we think, feel, and act. Click [here](#) to see an interesting and educational read about mental health.