

13th Conference of the European Sociological Association
29 August – 1 September 2017 Athens, Greece

RN16 ‘Sociology of Health and Illness’

CALL FOR PAPERS - deadline: 1 February 2017

[RN16_p]: Discussing mental health and illness

The predominance of psychiatric knowledge in explaining and dealing with mental health/illness has long been ascertained, described and criticized by many, either within psychiatry or external to it. The problem is conceptual, as psychiatric diagnoses don't include many important dimensions that have been shown as fundamental in explaining how mental illnesses appear and prevail – like income and education inequalities, working and housing conditions or different social roles expected from different people. The problem it is also practical since the strategies and resources mobilized to act upon mental ill behaviour depend on how illness categories are described either by professionals and lay people. One of the reasons for the prevalence of psychiatric and psychological explanations for mental health/illness can be found in the different power and legitimacy given to different professional knowledge – the psychiatric being the most important in this hierarchy. However, it can also be argued that the turn for a more plural discussion on the limits and effects of diagnoses and treatment could be fostered with a greater involvement of social scientists especially in putting forward recommendations on how to deal with it. A major contribution would be, for example, to give more visibility and legitimacy to the experience of people with a mental illness diagnose and therefore foster policies that are more adequate either to their personal experiences with mental illness and the social challenges they face. Acknowledging the importance of discussing these issues within a European context, characterized by various mental health policies, we welcome contributions on, but not limited to, the following points:

- Social meanings of mental health/illness
- Ways of dealing with mental illness/promoting mental health
- Physical configuration of spaces for delivering care in mental illness
- Personal consequences of mental illness
- Health professionals and lay perspectives on mental illness
- Social determinants of mental illness/health

Abstracts should not exceed 250 words

Abstracts must be submitted online – *in response to this RN 16 specific session* - to the submission platform: <http://www.europeansociology.org/>

For further information, feel free to contact the Session Organisers:

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