

26th Annual Scientific Meeting

22 October 2021

The 26th Annual Scientific Meeting of the PsychoSocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD) Study Group has just concluded, bringing together 84 delegates across 18 countries, from Canada to Australia.

There are approximately 60 million people with diabetes in the European region, and 463 million worldwide. Prevalence is increasing across all types of diabetes, and all age groups. Psychosocial aspects play a huge part in the optimal health and quality of life of all people with diabetes, and their families.

The meeting included 36 peer-reviewed scientific presentations focused on research into the psychological, behavioural and social aspects of all types of diabetes, including:

- depression, diabetes distress, and disordered eating across all types of diabetes
- living with type 1 diabetes: the use of novel technologies, the impact of hypoglycaemia on quality of life, and co-designing interventions to improve outcomes for young adults
- preventing and living with type 2 diabetes: personality and weight management, the impact of loneliness on incidence of type 2 diabetes, factors influencing uptake of a type 2 diabetes prevention programmes.

The aims of the PSAD Study Group – an official study group of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes – are to stimulate communication between researchers and clinicians in this field, improve the quality of research and stimulate dissemination of effective interventions in diabetes care. It also plays a crucial role in supporting and mentoring the next generation of researchers in this field.

Approximately one-third of the 80 delegates were PhD candidates, another one-third were within five years of their PhD and the remainder were mid-career / senior researchers. This made for a vibrant mix of innovation and experience.

The Chair of the PSAD Study Group, is Professor Jane Speight, Foundation Director of the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes, a partnership between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University. She is the first woman to chair the Group in its 26-year history. She has been a member since 1999 when she, herself, was a PhD candidate at Royal Holloway University of London.

“The meeting is a real highlight in the academic calendar for our members. It is a vibrant exchange among researchers and clinicians focused on understanding and improving the experience of living with diabetes”, said Professor Speight. “This meeting is special to the PSAD members because of the strong, shared research theme, the focus on professional development, and the opportunities to form meaningful, long-term international connections”.

Despite being a European Study Group, the conference was attended by delegates from 18 countries across the world, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the UK and USA.

While the pandemic has prevented the PSAD Study Group from meeting in person for the past two years, Professor Speight highlighted that online meetings have offered the opportunity to double the delegates, and widen it to people who might not otherwise have been able to attend, e.g. due to travel costs or time away from the office or family.

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Professor Speight highlighted that this is particularly important for women and early career researchers, who make up the majority of members attending this meeting.

“Although we are all looking forward to meeting face-to-face again, we do not underestimate the value of connecting online and the opportunities that brings for many of our members, particularly those with family or caring responsibilities”, said Professor Speight.

Professor Speight said she was delighted that the PSAD was able to grant several awards, which were distributed throughout the 26th Annual Scientific Meeting. They recognise the talent and dedication across the spectrum of research from PhD candidates to distinguished senior academics.

- The prestigious *2021 PSAD Anita Carlson Lecture* was awarded to:
 - Professor Norbert Hermanns, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Otto Friedrich University of Bamberg, Germany; and Director of the Research Institute of the Diabetes Academy Mergentheim. Professor Hermanns is a former Chair of the PSAD Study Group. His presentation was titled: “Psychology in diabetes – quo vadis?”
- The *2021 PSAD Science Award for Mid-career / Senior Researcher* was awarded to:
 - Professor Christina van der Feltz-Cornelis (Chair of Psychiatry and Epidemiology, University of York, UK) and colleagues for the peer-reviewed paper “Treatment for comorbid depressive disorder or subthreshold depression in diabetes mellitus: systematic review and meta-analysis”, published in *Brain and Behaviour*, Nov 2020
- The *2021 PSAD Science Award for Early Career Researcher* was awarded jointly to:
 - Shengxin Lui (PhD Candidate, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden) and colleagues for the peer-reviewed paper “Poor glycaemic control is associated with increased risk of neurodevelopmental disorders in childhood-onset type 1 diabetes: a population-based cohort study”, published in *Diabetologia*, Jan 2021
 - Dr Ruth Hackett (Post-doctoral researcher, King’s College London, UK) and colleagues for the peer-reviewed paper “Loneliness and type 2 diabetes incidence: findings from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing”, published in *Diabetologia*, Sept 2020
- The *2021 PSAD Best ePoster* was awarded to:
 - Hannah Chatwin (PhD Candidate, University of Southern Denmark) and colleagues for “Unmet support needs relating to hypoglycaemia among adults with type 1 diabetes: Results of a multi-country, web-based qualitative study”.

About the PSAD Study Group

The PsychoSocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD) Study Group is an official study group of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes. It has 245 members from 17 countries, including 45 new members in the past year alone. The Annual Scientific Meeting usually rotates around Europe but has been held online for the past two years due to the pandemic. This year’s conference was hosted virtually (from 20th to 22nd October 2021) by the PSAD’s Honorary Treasurer, Dr Debbie Cooke, The University of Surrey, UK.

For more information, visit: <http://www.psad-easd.eu/>

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