

## **2020-21 EU-SPR initiative to support young researchers: Dundee methods workshops January – April 2021**

The European Chapter of SPR is honored to announce further online activities primarily designed to support young researchers affiliated with SPR (all chapters). In April 2020, the planned EU-SPR methods workshop in Dundee (UK), one of the signature in-person events of our chapter, had to be canceled due to the pandemic. We are now very lucky that all speakers from the Dundee workshops join in to deliver their workshops and talks online: the result promises to be a top-quality level package on current psychotherapy research methods, offered by leading experts of our field, which no young SPR researcher would want to miss. Modules can be booked either separately, or, as we encourage, as an overall package.

Psychotherapy research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century faces many exciting challenges, including the operationalization of clinically relevant constructs. After all, the validity of our work will be assessed also based on the clinical utility and applicability of the methods and results. The opening talk by Svenja Taubner will discuss these challenges by referring to mentalization and attachment. Mechanistic explanations of how psychotherapy works is not only part of a current vibe, but at the very core of psychotherapy research: crossed-lagged panel models may be one fruitful way to go to explain the effects of psychotherapy. The workshop by Fredrik Falkenström will address this question. Qualitative research may inform measurement and the design of a psychotherapy trial. The workshop by Femke Truijens will explain how. Client and therapist synchronizing movements in the therapy hour are related with clinically meaningful constructs, such as the therapeutic alliance and empathy. The workshop by Johann Kleinbub and Fabian Ramseyer will provide a kickstart into non-verbal synchronization using a wide array of micro-process methodologies. Planning and conducting a comparative psychotherapy trial is one of the most challenging – and exciting – tasks of a psychotherapy researcher, and many details, both methodological and statistical, need attention beforehand. The workshop by Jan Boehnke explains in a step-by-step manner how to do this.

**Registration and payment:** The series has begun. Information regarding registration for individual modules follows.

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Talk Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 7pm-8pm CET

Free of charge (recording of the presentation will be available through the website)

**Investigating complex clinical constructs: The example of Attachment and Mentalisation**

Svenja Taubner, Institute for Psychosocial Prevention, University Heidelberg, Germany

<https://www.klinikum.uni-heidelberg.de/zentrum-fuer-psychosoziale-medizin-zpm/institut-fuer-psychosoziale-praevention>

**Abstract**

The lecture will deal with methodological problems of operationalizing complex clinical phenomena like attachment and mentalisation. In the history of both constructs, labor intensive assessments like the Adult-Attachment-Interview have been complimented by observational and self-report methods. The list of attachment and mentalisation measures grows each year but core quality criteria (reliability, validity) as well as concordance between measures is scarce. How do we deal with this emergence of a variety of measures in psychotherapy research? Do we need complex constructs like mentalisation and attachment?

**Key references:**

- Zettl, M., Volkert, J., Vögele, C., Kubera, K. & Taubner, S. (2019). The relationship between DSM-5 level of personality functioning and reflective functioning. *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research and Treatment*. DOI: 10.1037/per0000356
- Cropp, Carola, Taubner, Svenja, Salzer, Simone & Streeck-Fischer, Annette (2019). Psychodynamic Psychotherapy with Severely Disturbed Adolescents: Changes in Reflective Functioning. *Journal of Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy*. DOI: 10.1080/15289168.2019.1643212
- Talia, Alessandro, Miller-Bottome, Madeleine, Katznelson, Hannah, Pedersen, Signe H., Steele, Howard, Schröder, Paul, Origlieri, Amy, Scharff, Fredrik B., Giovanardi, Guido, Andersson, Mart, Lingiardi, Vittorio, Safran, Jeremy D., Lunn, Susanne, Poulsen, Stig & Taubner, Svenja (2018): Mentalizing in the presence of another: Measuring reflective functioning and attachment in the therapy process. *Psychotherapy Research*, DOI: 10.1080/10503307.2017.1417651

**About the presenter:** Svenja Taubner is a full professor and director of the Institute for Psychosocial Prevention at the University Hospital in Heidelberg Germany. She is a state licensed psychotherapists (psychoanalysis) and has specialised clinically in Mentalisation-based Treatment for Borderline Personality Disorder and Conduct Disorder. She did her PhD on changes in Reflective Functioning of adolescent offenders after a victim-offender-mediation and has since then conducted research on mentalisation using various methods of operationalisation. Her focus in research is in the area of aggression, psychotherapy process research, clinical trials and psychotherapy training. She is currently the Past President of the European Chapter of the Society for Psychotherapy Research and member of the national scientific board for psychotherapy in Germany. She is editor of two German Journals on Psychotherapy (*Psychotherapeut/ Praxis der Kinderpsychologie und Kinderpsychiatrie*) and Editorial Board Member of *Psychotherapy Research*.

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Workshop January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, 2pm – 5pm CET

Fee: USD 20 (registration has closed)

### **Using Cross-Lagged Panel Models for mechanisms of change research: An introduction**

Fredrik Falkenström, Department of Psychology, Linnaeus University, Sweden

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fredrik\\_Falkenstroem](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fredrik_Falkenstroem)

#### **Abstract**

**Objectives:** The introduction of novel methodologies in the past decade has advanced research on mechanisms of change in observational studies. Cross-Lagged Panel Models allow session-by-session predictions of change and focus on within-patient associations between mechanisms and outcomes. This is crucial given that change in mechanisms inherently takes place at a within-patient level. These models also enable preliminary casual inferences, which can guide the development of effective personalized interventions that target mechanisms of change.

**Methods:** The workshop will introduce the basic concepts of cross-lagged panel models, comparing these models with widely used statistical methods such as multiple regression and multilevel modeling, and the interpretation of model results and clinical implications. In the second part of the workshop we will introduce more complex cross lagged panel modeling, which allows to disentangle within- and between-patient effects, strengthening causal inference. The workshop will include presentation of equations, path diagrams, codes for R and Mplus, and examples from real and simulated datasets.

**Results:** Participants will become familiar with the basic concepts of cross-lagged models and their potential uses in psychotherapy research. They will be able to interpret model results and evaluate results published in scientific journals.

**Discussion:** Cross-lagged panel models can be used to study the complex longitudinal relationship between mechanisms of change and outcomes in psychotherapy research. Given the complexity of these models, many researchers and clinicians experience difficulty implementing them and interpreting their results. This workshop will introduce these techniques, allowing participants to continue exploring and using them in their own work.

#### **Recommended readings:**

- Falkenström, F., Solomonov, N., & Rubel, J. (2020). Using time-lagged panel data analysis to study mechanisms of change in psychotherapy research: Methodological recommendations. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*. doi:10.1002/capr.12293
- Falkenström, F., Finkel, S., Sandell, R., Rubel, J. A., & Holmqvist, R. (2017). Dynamic models of individual change in psychotherapy process research. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 85(6), 537-549. doi:10.1037/ccp0000203

**About the presenter:** Fredrik Falkenström is Professor in Clinical Psychology at Linnaeus University, Sweden. His research is broadly on psychotherapy process-outcome research, mostly on common factors such as working alliance and mentalization. He also has a strong interest in method issues in longitudinal studies, especially the application of cross-lagged panel models for strengthening causal interpretation in mechanisms of change research. Fredrik is Associate Editor for *Psychotherapy Research* and member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

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Workshop February 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, each at 10am-12pm CET

Fee USD 35 (zoomlink will be provided upon registration)

(deadline of registration for this individual module: February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021)

**‘Numbers are words too’: Taking a qualitative stance on quantitative data collection and measurement validity in psychotherapy research**

Femke L. Truijens, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Femke\\_Truijens](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Femke_Truijens)

**Abstract**

The Evidence-Based Treatment movement promotes an array of methodological standards and procedures to safeguard the quality of treatments. Default psychotherapy research uses quantitative symptom measures to assess symptom development pre-to-post treatment in (randomized) controlled settings. In this workshop, we go back to the very basis of conducting psychotherapy research, by scrutinizing how these default methods and procedures produce ‘the data’ that we as researchers take as the basis of evidence generation. In this, we will take ‘the numbers’ as words in a clinical story and we follow the stories on their way to become ‘the evidence’.

First, we discuss different epistemic approaches of ‘data’ and ‘data collection’ in quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodology. Second, we discuss how particular (formulation of) research questions require and/or justify quantitative and qualitative methods. We look in more detail to qualitative research designs, sampling, quality and validity, and publication of qualitative research. Third, we practice with interviewing and we discuss the importance of validity in the data collection process. Finally, we practice with qualitative coding and data analysis and discuss the impact of methodological choices on findings and conclusions. Overall, we highlight the reflexive nature of research for the sake of clinically valid and relevant evidence.

**Recommended readings:**

- Malterud, K. (2001). The art and science of clinical knowledge: Evidence beyond measures and numbers. *The Lancet*, 358, 397-340.
- McClimans, L. (2011). The art of asking questions. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 19, 521-538.
- Kvale, S. (1995). The social construction of validity. *Qualitative inquiry*, 1, 19-40.
- Stiles, W. B. (2006). Numbers can be enriching. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 24, 252–262.
- Truijens, F. L., Cornelis, S., Desmet, M., De Smet, M. M., & Meganck, R. (2019). Validity beyond measurement. Why psychometric validity is insufficient for valid psychotherapy research. *Frontiers in Psychology*. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00532.

**About the presenter:** Femke L. Truijens is assistant professor Clinical Psychology (Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands) and has an interdisciplinary background in philosophy of science and methodology. Her research is focused on validity and data collection processes in psychotherapy research and clinical practice. She worked on several randomized controlled psychotherapy studies, and she uses qualitative and mixed research methods to explore how patients experience questionnaire administration in the context of therapy and research. In postdoc research, Femke studies how validity of Routine Outcome Measurement is considered and secured ‘in the action’ by patients, therapists and policy makers. Femke’s mission is to dust off the term validity, which is not just a topic for grumpy old psychometricians but a clinically relevant question that is at play in each researcher’s and clinician’s daily practice. Femke is connected as external researcher to Ghent University, Belgium (see The Ghent Psychotherapy Study) and the UMC Utrecht, The Netherlands. Further, Femke teaches Qualitative Research Methods, Academic Writing, Severe Mental Illness and the Recovery Paradigm, Clinical Assessment, Systemic and

Couples Counselling, Research Ethics and Philosophy of Science. She is the founder of the Dutch Qualitative Research Collective for Mental Health Care (“*Kwalitatief Onderzoekscollectief GGZ*”, KOG). Finally, she works as psychotherapeutic counsellor for gifted adults in her private practice in The Netherlands.

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Workshop March 1<sup>st</sup> 8th, 15th, 22th, 2021, each at 6pm-8pm CET

(Deadline of registration for this individual module: February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

Fee USD 35 (zoomlink will be provided upon registration)

### **Nonverbal and physiological synchronisation for the study of psychotherapy process**

Johann R. Kleinbub, University of Padova, Italy

Fabian T. Ramseyer, University of Bern, Switzerland

#### **Abstract**

In the last decade, a growing body of literature begun reporting how the synchronization of nonverbal behaviour and physiological responses between patient and therapist was an effective marker of various aspects of psychotherapy. Constructs such as empathy, alliance, therapy outcome, and therapists’ attachment have been found associated with higher synchrony. While most of synchronization mechanisms and their specific connection to these constructs are still speculative, the phenomenon shows promise of becoming an objective measure of the clinical relationship, model-independent, and with an extremely high temporal resolution, putting this niche domain under the global spotlight.

While offering many advantages, synchronization research needs proper planning and awareness of various technical aspects. This workshop aims to provide the core theoretical concepts and methodological skills required to kick-start a research using these techniques.

Specifically, across the four sessions, we will a) discuss the principal theoretical hypotheses underlying synchronization and its role in the therapeutic process, the state of the art of the literature, and general methodological aspects of dyad-centred research; b) discuss physiological and video data acquisition, signal processing and Motion Energy Analysis (MEA); c) introduce basic usage of R, RStudio, and the rMEA package for a user friendly analysis of nonverbal synchrony; d) illustrate through an in-depth analysis of a case study how synchronization allows powerful micro-process research paradigms.

#### **About the presenters:**

Johann R. Kleinbub, Ph.D., psychologist, holds a post-doctoral research position at the University of Padova, Italy. His main research activity focuses on the investigation of physiological and nonverbal synchronization between patient and therapist, especially in the context of micro-process research. His theoretical framework is grounded on embodied cognition, complex dynamic systems, and relational psychodynamic psychology. Johann is a proficient programmer and developed two open source R packages, rMEA and DyadSync. He authored several scientific articles published in international peer-reviewed journals, as well as many papers in Italian and international conferences.

Fabian T. Ramseyer, Ph.D. Fabian is a habilitated senior researcher and psychotherapist at the Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy in Bern (University of Bern, Switzerland). He works in clinical practice, research, and in his own startup selling customized video-technology hardware. During his PhD, Fabian developed an automated tool for the assessment of nonverbal synchrony in videotaped psychotherapy sessions, called motion energy analysis (MEA). This computer application has been freely available since 2012 and it has been used by numerous independent research groups. Apart from his focus on nonverbal behavior, Fabian has explored time-series of psychotherapy sessions from

the perspective of dynamic systems theory. In this domain, he seeks to combine both idiographic- as well as nomothetic approaches to psychotherapy process-research.

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Workshop April 7th, 14th, 21th, 28th, 2021, each 4pm-6pm CET

(Deadline of registration for this individual module: April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021)

Fee USD 35 (zoomlink will be provided upon registration)

### **Conducting trials and experimental studies for the evaluation of psychological treatments**

Jan R. Boehnke, University of Dundee, UK

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/people/jan-boehnke>

#### **Abstract**

Studies involving randomisation are an integral part of strategies for the evaluation of intervention effects in particular and causal connections more generally. Conducting such studies well also for complex interventions (e.g., MRC framework) are to be evaluated.

This workshop will present in four sessions the key elements and practical steps for planning, developing, conducting, and reporting randomised studies of psychological interventions. First, the core logic and statistical arguments for an experimental study of a psychological intervention will be re-iterated to clarify when an experimental study (and which type of such a study) is indicated. Second, the main part of the workshop will deal with how to plan, design, and report such a study, covering both quantitative and qualitative elements. We will discuss the use of international guidelines and how and when to prepare protocols, statistical analysis plans, and/or registered reports. Finally, perspectives for advanced problems such as missing data and multi-site integration will be discussed. At the end of the workshop participants will be able to confidently assess published randomised studies of psycho-social interventions and know about the steps and resources needed to develop their own study.

#### **Recommended readings:**

- MRC (2006). Developing and evaluating complex interventions. Direct link to pdf: [www.mrc.ac.uk/complexinterventionsguidance](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/complexinterventionsguidance)
- Hayes et al. (2019). Promoting mental health and wellbeing in schools: examining Mindfulness, Relaxation and Strategies for Safety and Wellbeing in English primary and secondary schools: study protocol for a multi-school, cluster randomised controlled trial (INSPIRE). *Trials*, 20, 640.
- Munafò et al. (2017). A manifesto for reproducible science. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1, 21.

**About the presenter:** Jan is a senior lecturer in evaluation design and research methods at the School of Health Sciences (University of Dundee, UK). He is a psychologist by training and has worked for more than a decade in clinical research. Jan did his PhD investigating psychometric and statistical models to describe patient change in psychological treatments and focused during his post-doc on combining psychometric and epidemiological approaches to describe population mental health. In his current role he explores how innovations in latent variable (class, trait, factor, trajectory, and profile) models can be applied and adapted to address research and policy interests in multivariate, mixed measurement-level datasets. He is an experienced trials methodologist leading on a number of multi-site pragmatic trials (e.g., ISRCTN17631228, ISRCTN16386254). Jan is Co-Editor in Chief of Quality of Life Research and member of the advisory editorial board of Psychotherapy Research.