

First meeting of the EABCT Special Interest Group on OCD *Assisi 2011*

The first meeting of the EABCT SIG on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder has taken place in Assisi, Italy. It has been the first initiative of an EABCT SIG all over Europe, and the participants were all very excited to be part of this new project.

It is of common knowledge that OCD is one of the most disabling psychiatric disorders, generally very resistant to change. The price people pay if they are affected by OCD, or even if they are family members of an OC patient, are enormous. Scholars and researchers need to join their efforts in order to deepen their understanding of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and therefore to find more effective ways of helping patients who are affected by it. The Assisi's meeting has been organised in order to allow scholars and researchers a less formal and more interactive chance of meeting than international traditional congresses generally are.

This meeting has been made possible by the collaboration of various persons, who have believed in the importance of such an initiative: Rod Holland, president of the EABCT, who from the very start gave his support, Antonio Pinto as a member of the EABCT Board, and Francesco Mancini, director of the Specialisation School in Cognitive-Behavioural psychotherapy APC (Associazione di Psicologia Cognitiva).

The goal of this meeting was to foster the debate among experts on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, to deepen knowledge on OCD's mechanisms of functioning, maintenance of symptoms and treatment. The potential strengths of CBT has been deepened, thanks to the contributions of many different experts, studying the same disorder, but from different perspectives.

Moreover we wanted it to be an occasion of exchanging ideas among researchers and scholars on how to disseminate effective, sound, well-grounded Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy. We hope that, considering the reverberation that this event will have, both among professionals, and among the public, this goal will start to be reached.

In addition to the very interesting position papers that were presented and discussed, we had the chance of talking, in the course of a working group, of several topics regarding the future of our SIG:

- How could we get funds?
- Which purposes could we fix, as a group?
- Can we do any multi-centric research?
- Can we do something in order for the psychological research on OCD to be more easily disseminated among the clinicians and the public (as opposed to the research on medication)?
- What could the next steps be?
- When and where shall we meet again as a group?
- Is there someone else we should include and invite to participate?

All the participants contributed with their thoughts and ideas to enrich the discussion. It has been agreed that a reachable purpose to reach jointly could be the development of a toolkit for the assessment of OCD.

We talked a lot about the problem of the poor dissemination both among the public and the professionals, of psychological research on OCD and of evidence-based treatments and how to let

people know that effective psychological therapies are available. In the UK a lot of improvement in this field has been reached by the dissemination of reliable guidelines for treatment, such as the NICE guidelines. Thus many of the participants agreed on the idea of contributing to insert guidelines for effective treatments into various websites.

The working group allowed us as well to add new names of colleagues potentially willing to be part of the special interest group on OCD.

Our next meeting has already been fixed: we shall meet in May 2012, in Italy.

Participants came from Italy, Israel, Germany, Norway, Netherlands, United Kingdom

PARTICIPANTS:

Alessandro Couyoumdjian (ITALY)
Amelia Gangemi (ITALY)
Angelo Maria Saliani (ITALY)
Antonio Pinto (ITALY)
Barbara Barcaccia (ITALY)
Carlo Buonanno (ITALY)
Caterina Novara (ITALY)
Davide Coradeschi (ITALY)
Davide Dettore (ITALY)
Francesca Micaela Serrani (ITALY)
Francesco Mancini (ITALY)
Gideon Anholt (ISRAEL)
Gisela Röper (GERMANY)
Grazia Spitoni (ITALY)
Iftah Yovel (ISRAEL)
Jonathan Huppert (ISRAEL)
Katia Tenore (ITALY)
Kitty Dahl (NORWAY)
Luca Cieri (ITALY)
Marcel van Den Hout (NETHERLANDS)
Michael Zaudig (GERMANY)
Nicola Petrocchi (ITALY)
Nira Liberman (ISRAEL)
Nor Christian Torp (NORWAY)
Patricia van Oppen (NETHERLANDS)
Paul Salkovskis (UNITED KINGDOM)
Reuven Dar (ISRAEL)
Roberta Trincas (ITALY)
Rosario Capo (ITALY)
Sabine Zaudig (GERMANY)

The success of this meeting has really been beyond expectation. I must thank all the participants and all the colleagues who supported this project, and I hope to see all of them, and many more, in the next year's meeting.

Barbara Barcaccia