



4th Global Conference on Psychology

21 - 23 August 2026

Oxford, United Kingdom

Mental Health Challenges and Emerging Perspectives in Psychedelic Research: The Context of North Macedonia

Prof. Dr. Sofija Georgievska

Faculty of Philosophy, Macedonia

Abstract

The renewed international interest in psychedelic-assisted therapies has created new possibilities for innovation in mental health research, neuroscience, and psychiatric treatment. Substances such as psilocybin, LSD, DMT, and MDMA are increasingly investigated for their therapeutic potential in depression, anxiety disorders, trauma-related conditions, and addiction. While European research networks are rapidly developing interdisciplinary collaborations in this field, countries such as North Macedonia still have limited participation in emerging psychedelic research initiatives and related scientific discussions. At the same time, available data indicate increasing mental health challenges among children, adolescents, and young people in North Macedonia. According to UNICEF and WHO reports, stigma, limited accessibility of services, insufficient community-based mental health support, and lack of specialised resources remain major barriers within the national mental health system. Recent analyses highlight that mental health services for children and adolescents are still underdeveloped, with a need for stronger intersectoral cooperation, workforce capacity building, and evidence-based interventions. Research conducted in North Macedonia has shown concerning trends among younger populations. A national study on anxiety prevalence reported clinically significant anxiety symptoms in more than 6% of preschool children and over 11% of school-aged children. UNICEF reports additionally emphasize increasing psychosocial stress, emotional difficulties, and stigma associated with seeking mental health support among adolescents. The 2024 UNICEF Situation Analysis further notes demographic changes, migration-related pressures, and insufficient adaptation of social and health services to the evolving needs of children and young people. Within this context, the COST Action PSY-NET represents an important opportunity for strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, scientific exchange, and research capacity building in North Macedonia. Participation in European research networks could support knowledge transfer in neuroscience, psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, ethics, and public health, while also encouraging evidence-informed discussions on innovative mental health approaches. The paper argues that



4th Global Conference on **Psychology**

21 - 23 August 2026

Oxford, United Kingdom

greater inclusion of Southeast European countries in emerging psychedelic research initiatives is essential for reducing scientific disparities, strengthening international cooperation, and supporting the future development of accessible, ethical, and evidence-based mental health care systems.

Keywords: psychedelic research, mental health, North Macedonia, PSY-NET, neuroscience, psychotherapy, youth mental health, innovation in mental health care, interdisciplinary collaboration, evidence-based practice, European research networks, psychosocial wellbeing, psychiatry, public health, science diplomacy