

FENS Forum 2024 – Special Interest Session and Networking Event: “Prioritizing Brain Health in Youth: Bringing Neuroscience to Society and Informing Policy”

EBC – FENS Meeting

Day: Tuesday 25 June 2024

Duration: 10.00 - 12.00

Location: Messe Wien Exhibition & Congress Center, Vienna, Austria

Short Description of the Event

According to OECD half of the population will have to contend with mental health problems at some point in their life. Two-thirds of mental health disorders manifest before age 25. Good brain health plays a significant role in an individual’s well-being and profoundly impacts the collective economy and society. Today there is an urgent action needed on failing youth mental health. Neuroscience and brain development are key to address the situation. Understanding neural circuits is critical for gaining insights into the etiology of mental disorders. Brain development does not stop at birth and some aspects continue throughout infancy, childhood, and adolescence, allowing the full development of cognitive functions. Different determinants related to physical health, healthy environments, safety and security, life-long learning, and social connection as well as access to quality services influence the way our brains develop, adapt, and respond to stress and adversity. Ongoing progress in neurobiology and cognitive neuroscience allow the design of better prevention and intervention strategies to help avoid brain deficits and/or limit their impact and maintain brain health.

Although effective early detection and interventions exist, there are numerous unmet needs along the mental health care pathways. Navigating the mental health services system is often complex for patients and families due to fragmented services and discontinuity of care. Policies and programs to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts on schooling, employment, families, and risky behaviors are also paramount. The European Commission’s communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health released in June 2023 is a step forward but requires more commitment to boost children and young adult’s mental health. The European Brain Council (EBC) and the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) will convene a Mini Conference on 25 June at the upcoming [FENS Forum 2024](#) in Vienna to address these challenges. The event will explore what the opportunities are of incorporating a transdiagnostic and biopsychosocial-informed perspective. The meeting will bring together neuroscientists, clinicians, researchers, policymakers, patients & caregivers to raise awareness on brain health, bridging the gap between research, policy, and society.

Aim:

The event will aim 1) to look at solutions integrating research & innovation going beyond medicalization; 2) to examine ongoing progress in neurobiology and cognitive neuroscience allowing the design of better prevention and intervention strategies and 3) to address inclusiveness, health, and education challenges. This is a follow-up to the special interest session on “Brain capital and the young generation” that took place during FENS Forum 2022.

Preliminary programme

Opening Address

10.00 – 10.10

Chair of the meeting

- Suzanne Dickson, President, European Brain Council (EBC)

Introduction by Irene Tracey, President, Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS)

Keynote lectures: Brain development and transdiagnostic classification

10.10 – 10.20 Brain development and children

Francesca Cirulli, Board Member, Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS)

10.20 – 10.30 A transdiagnostic classification

Martien Kas, European College of NeuroPsychopharmacology (ECNP), President Chair and board member of the network task force

Session 1: Youth and caregiver priorities

10.30-10.50 Personal testimonies - Meaningful engagement of young people living with mental health conditions

Anastasia Benzahi, Teacher of Physics, French National Education

Priorities – Insights

Åsa Konradsson Geuken, President of the Swedish Society of Schizophrenia and Board member of EUFAMI

Session 2: Brain health clinical innovation in youth: Panel discussion

10.50 – 11.20 Moderator: Kevin Rostasy, European Pediatric Neurology Society (EPNS) President

- Impact of adverse childhood experiences on child and adolescent mental development: current research and future directions

Eva Kestens, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Belgium

- The value of treatment, the case of autism

Celso Arango, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Service at Hospital General Universitario Gregorio Marañón, Madrid, Spain

- Rethinking the management of brain disorders - the case of schizophrenia

Pavel Mohr, Clinical Director, National Institute of Mental Health, Czech Republic

- Age transitioning and prevention

Judit Balazs, Chair of the Child Psychiatry Section, European Psychiatric Association

Session 3: Time to commit to policy change: Open Discussion

11.20 – 11.55

Moderator: Judit Simon, Department of Health Economics, Center for Public Health, Medical University of Vienna, Austria

Sasa Jenko, Head of Sector for Health Reforms, DG REFORM- Labour Market, Education, Health & Social Services · European Commission

Jennifer Hall, WHO Athens Office for Quality of Care and Patient Safety

Interaction with the audience: Q&A

Concluding Remarks

11.55 – 12.00

- Vinciane Quoidbach, Research Project Manager, European Brain Council (EBC)
- Suzanne Dickson, President, European Brain Council (EBC)

Contact: Vinciane Quoidbach, Research Project Manager vinc@braincouncil.eu



This event is organized by the European Brain Council (EBC), a non-profit organization based in Brussels encompassing scientific societies, patient organizations, professional societies, and industry partners. Its main mission is to promote brain health and research with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of the estimated 179 million Europeans living with brain conditions. Aiming to speak with one voice, EBC stands as the platform to foster cooperation between its member organizations and other stakeholders, consistently promoting dialogue between scientists, industry, and society. As the network of key players in the "Brain Area" in Europe, EBC uniquely configured to be the go-to organization to strengthen ties within the broader community at the European and global levels.