



Representatives' Reports, 2020-2021

International Psychogeriatric Association (IPA)

Name of the Representative: John Brennan

The IPA, founded in 1982 and having members in more than 50 countries, is a unique and diverse professional healthcare community promoting better mental health for older people - across disciplines, across borders, and across issues concerning older people. Epidemiologists, geriatricians, neurologists, nurses, occupational therapists, primary care physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, scientists, social workers, speech and language therapists and many other healthcare professionals come to the IPA community from all around the world to discuss, learn and share knowledge and research about mental health in older adults.

ACTIVITIES / EVENTS

The IPA continues to be keen to expand the membership base across health and social care professionals working with older people about mental health issues.

During the year, I participated at Board meetings and on a membership standing-committee of the Board to develop and support membership

I continued as a member of an IPA working group to review the title of the Association. As a social worker whose interest is social work and older people, I am keenly aware of the ageist attitudes found across Europe and indeed, the world. I therefore take opportunities such as this to combat these attitudes, including, as in this case, the use of language. As a result of the sub-committee's work, the title will likely change by dropping the word 'Psychogeriatric' while retaining the acronym 'IPA'

At the time of writing, I continue to participate on the IPA's sub-committee organising the annual IPA Congress which this year is again a virtual event. During the congress I will participate in a masterclass for early career professionals on the 18th November next.

Young Researchers' Network: The Association set up a recently qualified researchers network – PhD or post doctoral professionals. I plan to circulate information on this network once I have final details. Indeed, it has the possibility of offering an interdisciplinary forum for our young generation of socialworkers who will come together as a result of the forthcoming IFSW Europe Project 2020-2021.



ACHIEVEMENTS FOR IFSW EUROPE

Having a social work presence on the Board of the IPA has been a positive experience for me and I believe for social work and IFSW Europe. It has provided a platform for the voice of social work in what has been to-date a largely medical group. The Association is keen to have our voice at the table and welcomes the social work perspective. Also, the Association is global, so the potential audience goes far beyond Europe.

Because of other demands, I was not able to participate as much as I wished to during the year. Therefore I decided not to go forward for re-election to the IPA Board of Directors. Instead, our UK colleague, Gerry Nosowska has been elected to the Board as and from 1st November 2021. I wish her all the best in her new role and I will support her in carrying it out.

CHALLENGES

The Covid-19 pandemic has not helped matters because, as with all other organisations, the plans for face-to-face meetings have all been shelved, so it is more difficult to get to know people in the virtual on-line space.

A further challenge is the cost of membership. This Association is primarily made up of individual members and the membership fee is high by social work standards and therefore, precludes many.

John Brennan

IFSW Europe Vice-President and Representative to the European Social Platform