

# 16<sup>th</sup> Clinical Nursing & Nurse Education Conference

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### Mental health in higher education students of health sciences

**Background & Aim:** The mental health of students in higher education of health sciences has been widely discussed in the literature. Research has focused mainly on the description of the dysfunctional aspects and associated with the risk of developing mental disorders, and less approaches based on a conceptualization of positive mental health. In a holistic perspective, we understand the student's person as an individual, traditionally young adult, who experiences different developmental tasks, which put to the test their adaptive capacities, and can influence their mental health. The aim of this study is to underline the importance, for the promotion of mental health in students of health sciences, of adaptive academic life experiences and the personal competences.

**Methods:** The research dealt with a sample of 620 people, medical, nursing and applied health students, whose average age was 20.3 and ranged between 18 and 25 years, 81% being female. The instruments used were a Demographic Questionnaire; Academic Life Experiences Questionnaire and Mental Health Inventory.

**Results:** Is the last year degree, male nursing students live with their parents and who have no other occupation besides studying, who appear to be the most adapted and showed better mental health and more positive personal competences. Two predictor models of mental health were defined. The model which has the academic life experiences as predictor is composed by the psychological well-being, self-confidence, physical well-being and cognitive competences. The model with the personal competences as predictor contains such variables as global self-worth, intellectual ability, relationships with parents, physical appearance and romantic relationships.

**Conclusions:** We discuss the relevance of the results, namely for the intervention of different structures of Higher Education Institutions, to implement strategies which may influence the individual process of academic adaptation, the development of personal competences and the promotion and maintenance of mental health in these students.

### Biography

Rui Porta-Nova is a Clinical Psychologist, has a PhD in Mental Health and is coordinating Professor at the Health Higher School of the Portuguese Red Cross. His main research interests are related to the study of mental health and psychological well-being in young adult students of health sciences. He is serving as Trainer in the Mental Health area and has a private clinical activity as a Psychotherapist and member of the governing bodies of an NGO in the field of Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Mental Health. He is the founding member of counseling and psychological support services network in higher education.

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