

Research Colloquium „Medical Psychology“

Decolonizing global mental health?

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Time: 24. Jan. 2023, 14:00-15:30

Place: Hörsaal Augenklinik (W40)

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Mike Mösko

Talk The field of global mental health has gained remarkable traction over recent years to the extent that it is now part of mainstream discussions in health globally. An important part of the genesis of the field, however, was a critique of mainstream psychiatry and a commitment to careful consideration of the contexts, including political contexts, in which mental health and disorders are experienced. Given the history, the field of global mental health is often uncomfortably poised between the search for pragmatic global solutions to pressing needs and the role of global mental health as a discipline of critique and fundamental social change. An added layer of complexity at the present time is the context of calls, currently, for decolonization in a range of academic and applied fields. In this presentation I reflect on tensions and challenges in how global mental health is understood as a field of inquiry and practice, and suggest ways in which voices from the global south are crucial in current debates. I draw on my own work as a clinical psychologist living and working in southern Africa.

Bio Leslie Swartz is a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He holds a PhD in psychology from University of Cape Town and a PhD in English from Stellenbosch University. He publishes widely on global mental health and disability inclusion issues, with a focus on southern Africa. He serves as editor-in-chief of the *South African Journal of Science* and of the *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*. He is rated as an A rated researcher (defined as a researcher “unequivocally recognised by their peers as leading international scholars in their field for the high quality and impact of their recent research outputs”) in the South African system, and has received a number of awards for his work including the Academy of Science of South Africa Gold Medal for Science for Society.

