



21st ESHMS conference Early Career Workshop

Tuesday 18 August 2026
Hamburg- Germany

The European Society of Health and Medical Sociology is pleased to announce its Early Career Workshop scheduled for Tuesday, August 18, 2026. This in-person workshop precedes the main conference, which will be held in Hamburg, Germany. The one-day interactive program is tailored to assist young scholars in developing analytical skills, sharing and critically reflecting on their work. The primary goal is to bring together early career researchers for discussions on their research, exploring emerging approaches to theory and methods, addressing challenges, receiving feedback on their writing and thinking, and fostering collaboration, support, and networking through communal activities.

Program

This edition of the ESHMS early career workshop will focus on reflexivity in qualitative methods for studying the topic of this 21st conference's overarching theme: mental health. As researchers, when we engage with participants' lived experiences of health and illness, we must continually interrogate how our own identities, values, assumptions, and emotional responses shape every stage of the research process -from study design to knowledge (co)production. This one-day workshop addresses the critical need for structured spaces in which qualitative health researchers can develop and deepen their reflexive practice. Through two keynote talks, facilitated exercises, and peer dialogue, the workshop invites participants -particularly those at early career stages- to cultivate critical reflexive practices that foreground researcher wellbeing alongside the integrity of the knowledge produced. Participants will leave with practical tools and a shared commitment to ethical, reflexive inquiry.

Out of the swamp and through the gossamer: Reflexivity in qualitative health research

Melissa Ceuterick, University of Ghent (B.)



Reflexivity in qualitative research has often been described as 'a journey through a swamp', a metaphor that acknowledges the intricacies and quandaries of practicing reflexivity. Departing from a personal question, Melissa Ceuterick will take you on a brief tour through multiple approaches to reflexivity in the qualitative research landscape, out of the figurative swamp and through the gossamer. Based on a personal reading of the vast literature on reflexivity, her talk will offer theoretical signposts, personal applications and inspiration to embark on an applied reflection session.

Extended and emotional reflexivity

Alice Scavarda, University of Torino (It.)

In its extended sense, reflexivity is not only about reflecting on the researcher's experience; it is also a way of co-constructing knowledge with participants. In this context, emotional reflexivity involves being aware of what the researcher is experiencing with participants, their emotional engagement in the field and the emotional work they are doing. Drawing on her own research experience, Alice Scavarda will demonstrate how practising extended and emotional reflexivity can foster a key feature of ethnographic research: the capacity for resonance.



For who?

The Early Career Workshop is intended for PhD students and early career researchers (up to 3 years postdoc) in the social sciences and public health, interested in a sociological approach to health and illness. The workshop is limited to 10 participants and will be in English.



While attendance at the main conference is not mandatory for workshop participation, we strongly encourage it as a unique opportunity to meet European and global scholars and hear key-note speakers. The workshop's cost is covered by ESHMS, but selected young researchers will be asked to pay the ESHMS membership fee. For more information please visit <https://eshms.eu/membership>

How to apply?

To apply, submit a Word document outlining:

1. Your motivation to participate in this thematic workshop (250 words)
2. Your research project + stage of research (250 words)
3. Your full name, institution, and contact details

Send your application **no later than April 15 2026**

To **Melissa Ceuterick** (melissa.ceuterick@ugent.be) and **Alice Scavarda** (alice.scavarda@unito.it)

Applicants will be notified of acceptance by May 1 2026.

Selected participants should submit an assigned piece of work they intend to discuss during the workshop by August 15 2026.

For further inquiries, please contact Melissa Ceuterick (melissa.ceuterick@ugent.be)