

# ETHICAL ASPECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH

**31.10-1.11.2011**

**House of Science and Letters in Helsinki**



Two Masks, 1931, Otto Mäkilä, Finnish surrealist  
Ateneum Art Museum, Finnish National Gallery/Central Art Archives/Janne Mäkinen

The focus of this conference is on ethical questions regarding mental health seen from different perspectives. Many different factors may affect the mental health of an individual. Psychological and social circumstances for a person are of great importance, but the extent of this influence on the mental health varies according to the genetic composition of the person. Different kind of stress induction can cause a mental health disorder for a person. These disorders appear in all age groups and affect families, close relatives and working places. The diseases themselves cause individual suffering, and in addition mental health problems still carry a certain stigma.

Advances in neuroscience are challenging our understanding of the nature of the mind and the brain. Recent studies in genetics, chemical signalling in the brain, as well as neuroimaging have provided new insights into mental health diseases raising a number of important questions. And yet, the biological models have been criticized as being too detached from the social and psychological influences for development of mental health diseases.

To what extent can the socio-psychological and the biological explanations find common ground to work towards a better understanding of the human mind and the prevention of mental health disease in the Nordic countries? The conference will examine issues from a multidisciplinary perspective, highlighting the ethical aspects by looking at some current mental health problems in the Nordic societies today, such as crime, treatment of ADHD, suicide and problems related to the mental health situation of ethnic minorities in the Nordic countries today.

Target audience: Government officials, doctors, health care workers, patient groups, researchers, pharmaceutical companies, social workers, media, students

**Participation is free of charge**

## DAY 1

12.00 – 12.30 Registration and coffee

12.30 – 12.40 Opening and welcome  
Aaro Tupasela, Chair Nordic Committee on Bioethics

### **I PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF MENTAL DISEASES**

Chair: Aaro Tupasela

12.40 – 13.00 Mental Diseases in a Historical Perspective  
Ilpo Helén, Senior Fellow, Department of Sociology, University of Helsinki, Finland

13.00 – 13.20 Mental Disease Models  
Dr. Peter W. Jepsen, The National University Hospital, Copenhagen, Denmark

13.20 – 13.40 Cultural Views of Mental Distress: Examples on Somali Migrants  
Marja Tiilikainen, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki, Finland

13.40 – 14.00 Social Determinants of Mental Health in Childhood- a Gene-Environment Perspective  
Anders Hjern , Professor of Social Paediatrics, Nordic School of Public Health, Sweden

14.00 – 14.20 Discussion

14.20 – 14.50 Coffee

### **II BIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL DISEASES**

Chair: Gunhild Isfeldt

14.50 – 15.10 Neuroimaging in the Study of the Brain and its Functions  
Jyrki Mäkelä, MD, PhD, BioMag Laboratory, Helsinki University Central Hospital, Finland

15.10 – 15.30 The Biological Basis of Psychiatric Disorders  
Elias Eriksson, Professor of Pharmacology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

15.30 – 15.50 Can Neurosciences Explain Mental Diseases and Mental Distress?  
Steven Rose, Professor of Biology and Neurobiology, Open University, UK

### **III CRIME, SOCIETY AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Chair: Sirpa Soini

15.50 – 16.10 Terrorism, as for instance seen in Norway in July - Society View  
Elisabeth Eide, PhD, University of Oslo, Norway

16.10 – 16.50 Mental Disorders and Crime  
- Which Mental Disorders are Associated with Crime, Violence as well as Non-Violence and Why  
Sten Levander, Professor Emeritus, General and Court Psychiatrist, Sweden

16.50 – 17.30 DISCUSSION

## DAY 2

### IV MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN PRACTICE TODAY

Chair: Göran Elinder

- 9.00 – 9.20 Ethical Aspects of Neuropsychiatric Screening and Diagnostics  
Ingemar Engström, Professor in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Örebro University Hospital, Sweden
- 9.20 – 9.40 Ethics and Suicide  
Nanna Briem, Psychiatrist, The National University Hospital of Iceland
- 9.40 – 10.00 Can We Force Those at Serious Risk?  
Páll Matthíasson, Psychiatrist, Chief Executive of Mental Health Services, The National University Hospital of Iceland
- 10.00 – 10.20 Mental Disorders and Treatments of Ethnic Minorities in a Nordic Country  
Katrine Schepelern Johansen, Post Doc, Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- 10.20 – 10.40 Discussion
- 10.40 – 11.00 Coffee

### V CHALLENGES AND POLICIES IN MENTAL HEALTH

Chair: Firouz Gaini

- 11.00 – 11.20 What is Needed to Meet the Patients' Needs?  
Tore Gundersen, Anthropologist, Municipality of Lørenskog, Norway
- 11.20 – 11.40 Ethical Aspects of Mental Health and Stigma  
Anne Lindhardt, Psychiatrist, Manager of the National University Hospital, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 11.40 – 12.00 Policies in the Nordic Countries Regarding Mental Health  
Jan Tvedt, Senior Adviser, Norwegian Directorate of Health, Department for Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- 12.00 – 12.20 Ethical Aspects of Public versus Private Research in Mental Health  
Professor Peter Gøtzsche, Director of The Nordic Cochrane Centre, Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 12.20 – 13.00 Panel discussion
- 13.00 Closing the conference

For more information about the conference contact the organizing committee:

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**The Nordic Committee on Bioethics** was founded in 1989 to promote Nordic cooperation and exchange of information between scientists, parliamentarians, opinion leaders and public officials in the area of bioethics.

The Committee has two members from each Nordic country and an observer from the Faroe Island. Members are appointed for three years at a time by the Nordic Council of Ministers from the nominations of the Nordic countries.

The mission of the Nordic Committee on Bioethics is to foster co-operation between the Nordic countries by bringing together representatives from different backgrounds to discuss and analyse issues in bioethics in order to achieve greater awareness, promote common understanding and improve policy in this area.

**For more information:** [www.ncbio.org](http://www.ncbio.org)  
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Door to the Unknown, 1947, Otto Mäkilä, Finnish surrealist  
Ateneum Art Museum, Finnish National Gallery/Central Art Archives/Janne Mäkinen