

## Short bio for Danuta Wasserman



Photo: David Gimlin

Danuta Wasserman (DW) is a psychiatrist and Univ. Prof. Dr. Med. in Psychiatry and Suicidology at Karolinska Institutet (KI), and the current Director and Founding Head of the National Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention of Mental Ill-Health (NASP) at KI, since 1993. DW has been appointed as the Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research, Methods Development and Training in Suicide Prevention since 1997 and assists in the development of mental health promotion and suicide preventive programs on five continents. She is the former President of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) and the International Academy of Suicide Research (IASR). She is serving on the Board of the EPA and presently Chairs the Committee on Ethics. DW was the Chair and is presently the Co-Chair of the Suicidology Section at the World Psychiatric Association (WPA). She is also a member of the planning committee of the WPA. DW is the former Chair of the Public Health Sciences Department at KI and developed masters and PhD programs for candidates in low- and middle-income countries, as well as mental health care programs for clinical psychiatrists with a focus on psychiatric disorders and suicide. DW is an Expert Advisor to the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Mental Health Gap Action (mhGAP) Programme which operates in low- and middle-income countries to improve services for neurological, mental and substance use disorders. She serves as an expert to UNICEF programme on mental health among adolescents at the population level and in the Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT) programme, aimed at developing guidelines on mental health promotion and preventive interventions for adolescents in collaboration with WHO. DW provides technical support to the WHO member states and has projects in central and eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America as well as United States and Australia. Professor Wasserman is the Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in the UK, Honorary Member of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association and Honorary President of Estonian-Swedish Mental Health Institute. She served as an international advisor to the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology.

DW has won numerous national and international honors and awards, including the Public Health Prize from the Nordic Council of Ministers of Health for the outstanding contribution to public mental health research and prevention, the Distinguished Research Award from the American Foundation for Suicide Research (AFSP), the Hans Rost Prize from the German Association for Suicide Prevention for the outstanding contribution to suicide research and prevention, the Stengel Research Award for outstanding contributions in the field of suicide research and prevention from the International Association for Suicide Prevention and Crisis

Intervention (IASP), and from the British Medical Association (BMC) Board of Science Award for the Public Understanding of Science for her book *Depression: the facts* published by Oxford University Press. DW is recipient of the H M The King's of Sweden gold medal. DW is the author of numerous scientific articles, reports and book chapters. She is the editor of the *Oxford Textbook of Suicidology and Suicide Prevention: A Global Perspective*, published by Oxford University Press in 2009 which is updated and new edition 2020 is in press. Her comprehensive book for busy clinicians and the broad audience interested in suicide prevention "Suicide an unnecessary death" published by Martin Dunitz (2001), has been translated into Chinese, Japanese and Russian and updated for a new edition by the Oxford University Press (2016).

DW's research activities comprise epidemiological, psychodynamic and genetic studies of suicidal behaviours. In 2009, she received the honour from the Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institutet, to organize the "Nobel Conference on the role of genetics in promoting suicide prevention and the mental health of the population." She was responsible for organizing several national and international conferences in psychiatry and suicidology.

DW is the Principle Investigator for large-scale randomized controlled trials (RCT), "Saving and Empowering Young Lives in Europe (SEYLE)" and "Working in Europe to Stop Truancy Among Youth (WE-STAY)," assessing the effectiveness of different intervention approaches and prevention strategies for adolescents. Both RCTs are funded with €3 million each by the European Union (EU). DW leads also a large RCT in Sweden 2016 - 2020 involving 163 schools, with the aim to test the effectiveness of the mental health promoting, Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) program in comparison to a control group. DW is the Swedish site-coordinator of the NEVERMIND RCT-project (NEurobehavioral predictive and peRsonalized Modeling of depressive symptoms during primary somatic Disorders through ICT-enabled, self-management procedures) and POTION, an RCT studying promotion of social interaction through emotional body odours. Both projects are funded during 2017-2023 by the European Union, Horizon 2020 Framework program.

Since 2000, she serves as the Principle Investigator for the Genetic Investigation of Suicide and Attempted Suicide Project (GISS project), funded by the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Research Foundation in Sweden. DW serves as a scientific consultant to Columbia University, Texas University and Montana State University in the United States.

Professor Wasserman is also the chair and a member of several national and international working groups on mental health promotion and suicide prevention.



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