

# The History and Legacy of the WHO Studies of Schizophrenia

## GLOBALIZING SCHIZOPHRENIA

### CALL FOR PAPERS

#### Workshop Dates

June 13–14, 2024

Max Planck Institute for the  
History of Science, Berlin

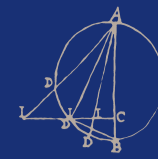
#### Application Procedure

Please send an abstract of up to  
500 words and a short CV to  
[afreeborn@mpiwg-berlin.de](mailto:afreeborn@mpiwg-berlin.de) by

December 1, 2023

Travel funding and accommodation  
will be available for participants

Contact: [afreeborn@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de](mailto:afreeborn@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de)



# Globalizing Schizophrenia

## The History and Legacy of the WHO Studies of Schizophrenia

Convenor: Alfred Freeborn, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science

The World Health Organization studies of schizophrenia were unique in their international, temporal and technical scale. Beginning with the International Pilot Study of Schizophrenia (1965–1973) and culminating in the International Study of Schizophrenia (1991–1996), there has been no other comparable attempt to carefully interview, record and follow up patients with psychosis across the globe. They play a critical role in the internal history of the modern field of psychiatric epidemiology, deployed as both a source of authoritative evidence and as a proof of concept for psychiatric epidemiology in general. The studies are also taken to mark an important origin for the contemporary Movement for Global Mental Health, in particular for the suggestion of early results that prognosis for schizophrenia varied between “developed” and “developing” countries. For historians of medicine, the studies present a highly rich and productive case study for writing global and transnational histories of medical research in the post-1945 era.

The international workshop “Globalizing Schizophrenia: The History and Legacy of the WHO Schizophrenia Studies” seeks to bring together historians, philosophers, anthropologists, and psychiatrists to discuss both the historical achievements of the WHO studies on schizophrenia and their legacy, with a particular focus on understanding the links between these early studies and the contemporary Global Mental Health discourse. It builds on the existing work of an international group of historians who have addressed the WHO studies, including **Ana Antic** in Copenhagen, **Harry Wu** in Taiwan and **David Robertson** in the USA, as well the critical historical and anthropological scholarship on the Movement for Global Mental Health. The workshop will combine a more historical focus on the early days of psychiatric epidemiology with contemporary perspectives on Global Mental Health from anthropologists and psychiatrists to generate a dialogue about the nature, limits, dangers and opportunities of the “global” in mental health care.

We are interested in papers on the history and legacy of the WHO studies as well as adjacent projects in order to generate a broad and comprehensive set of papers which will form the basis for an edited anthology. The workshop will take place on **Thursday the 13th and Friday the 14th of June 2024** at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. Travel funding and accommodation will be available for participants.

### Confirmed Participants

**Ana Antic, Doerte Bemme, Steeves Demazeux, Rhodri Hayward, Nicolas Henckes, Timo Houtekamer, Sarah Marks, John McGrath, David Robertson, Anastassiya Schacht, Derek Summerfield, Harry Wu**