

# **EAWOP SGM Activity Report**

20 December 2017

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. Meeting overview**

Date and Place: September 27-28, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Organizers: Prof. dr. E. Demerouti, Prof. dr. A. B. Bakker, Prof. dr. M.C.W. Peeters, Dr. K. Breevaart

Topic: New Directions in Burnout Research

Keynotes: Dr. Arno van Dam, PhD; Tilburg University | Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the Netherlands

Participants: A list of participants is attached

### **2. Key Highlights**

An important highlight of the SGM was the keynote by Dr. Arno van Dam. His keynote challenged several general and fundamental assumptions in the burnout literature. A first point of critique concerned the conceptualization and operationalization of burnout as a syndrome that includes the dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy. According to Van Dam, but also Schaufeli, De Witte and colleagues, burnout should include an assessment of impaired cognitive functioning – a symptom that is observed in clinical practice among burnout patients. A second issue relates to chronic problems in the non-work domain (private life) that can often contribute to burnout. Third, when studying burnout, it seems crucial to differentiate between various phases in the burnout process. Fourth, several presentations, including the three presentations by Van Dam, Bakker, and Roczniowska, highlighted the fact that employees who experience high levels of burnout start to show self-undermining behaviors, like making mistakes, creating stress and confusion, suboptimal communication, etc., which creates new job demands that are added to the existing demands. This means that individuals who are confronted with burnout may end up in a vicious cycle of job demands, exhaustion, and dysfunctional coping. Fifth, several presentations discussed the validity of new measures for the assessment of burnout, including the already known Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, but also the Burnout Assessment Tool. A sixth highlight concerned the daily diary approach of burnout symptoms, which helped to understand the processes employees go through when confronted with high daily job demands, and how this is linked to physiological stress indicators (e.g., hair cortisol). Finally, burnout interventions were discussed (e.g. by De Vries) – including opportunities to reduce burnout symptoms in otherwise healthy employees through running therapy, and through job crafting.

### **3. Meeting Outcomes**

At the end of the SGM, all participants actively discussed about the continuation and implementation of all the knowledge that has been exchanged. The following future plans have been made:

- A special issue on new direction in burnout research will be composed. The proposal will be send to EJWOP;
- The organizers will write a position paper for this special issue;
- In close collaboration with clinical psychologists (among others our keynote speaker Dr. Arno van Dam), we will develop new burnout interventions;
- A European daily diary study on experiences of burned-out patients will be designed and conducted;
- More attention will be generated for objective measures of burnout;
- The possibilities for a European grant proposal about burnout interventions on four different levels (individual, team, work tasks, organization) using different measures (objective, subjective) will be explored.