

A Professional Path of a Suicidologist: An Interview with Danuta Wasserman

Interview · Vita Poštuvan

Dr Danuta Wasserman is Professor of Psychiatry and Suicidology at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden. She is currently the head of NASP, the National Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention of Mental Ill-Health, at Karolinska Institutet and has been the director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research, Methods Development and Training in Suicide Prevention for almost 20 years. Prof. Wasserman is President Elect of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) and will serve as President from 2023 to 2026. Dr Wasserman has had an impressive career as a researcher and psychiatrist. She was the first female president of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) and the International Association of Suicide Research (IASR). Prof. Wasserman has received several national and international honours and awards. In 2022, she was selected by the jury members as the winner of the EPA Constance Pascal – Helen Boyle Prize for Outstanding Achievement by a Woman in Working to Improve Mental Health Care in Europe. Prof Wasserman has also authored numerous scientific articles, reports and book chapters. Prof. Wasserman's research activities include epidemiological, psychodynamic and genetic studies on suicidal behaviour. She has been responsible for organising several national and international conferences in the field of psychiatry and suicidology. In an interview, she will talk about why she focused on psychiatry and how she started working in the field of suicidology, who she considers her mentor during her career, how her career developed, what obstacles she had to overcome and what kept her going during difficult times. She will reveal what her best career move was, what she would do differently today and what she values most about her job. She will conclude her interview with advice, especially for young women starting their careers now.