



Press Release

From Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, with the support of ROVI

Created a Chair to study the psychological impact and benefits of technology in mental health prevention

- The objective is to help improve society's mental health and take advantage of the opportunities the new technologies offer to enhance the quality of life and the care that people receive.
- In Spain, the pandemic caused an increase in mental disorders of as much as 47% in minors and 59% in suicidal behaviours.

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The *Universidad Pontificia Comillas*, in collaboration with Laboratorios Farmacéuticos ROVI, has created a new Chair of Innovation and Digital Mental Health to respond to the psychological effects that digitalization may have on society. Additionally, this Chair will also analyze how technology can help improve mental health, life quality, and the care provided to all people.

“We are at a historical moment because the global effects of the pandemic have caused great psychological damage to our society and because, for the first time, one of the primary objectives of the Government and public and private institutions is to allocate human and financial resources to improve mental health in Spain”, said Dr. Lucía Halty, the Chair’s director.

The figures regarding the deterioration of mental health in Spain are alarming. Last April, the Multi-Disciplinary Working Group on Mental Health in Childhood and Adolescence warned that the pandemic had caused an increase of as much as 47% in mental disorders in minors¹. Likewise, since 2019, cases of

¹ <https://www.aepap.org/actualidad/comunicados-y-notas-de-prensa/la-pandemia-ha-provocado-un-aumento-de-hasta-el-47-en-los-trastornos-de-salud-mental-de-los-menores>

anxiety, depression, and ADHD have tripled or even quadrupled and suicidal behaviour has increased by as much as 59%.

In the midst of this situation, healthcare professionals are also suffering the consequences of the pandemic, and the stress under which the health system has been placed makes it necessary to provide specific care to this group of people.

“Not only the healthcare world is affected. Companies are also greatly concerned about the mental health of their workers, since there are data that refer to a significant deterioration in emotional well-being in the workplace, combined with the stress that is being generated by the digitalization process we are experiencing”, explained Halty.

The new Chair at Comillas has the support of Laboratorios Farmacéuticos ROVI. For its Chairman and CEO, Juan López-Belmonte, “this project represents an opportunity to obtain deeper knowledge of the impact of the new technologies on mental health in our society. In addition, it allows us to enhance the dialogue in the academic, healthcare and workplace contexts regarding current models for mental health detection, prevention, and intervention.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown that the traditional model of access to healthcare resources, particularly psychological resources, needs to evolve. Companies and institutions should redesign the system and introduce new technologies to ensure progress and continuing improvement. Technology and mental health should go hand in hand to improve the care that people receive.

One of the great challenges that Spanish society is facing is to take advantage of the opportunities offered by what is called the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”, characterised by digitalisation, sensorisation and connectivity, making intensive use of the new information and communication technologies. To this end, “it is of fundamental importance to be able to study the impact that this technological transformation has on our society, particularly on its younger members,” according to Prof. Mariano Ventosa, Vice-Rector for Research and Faculty at Comillas.

The Chair of Innovation and Mental Health at Comillas spans a good number of faculties and university disciplines. Although the greatest weight of the Chair will be borne by the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences (Comillas CIHS), the Faculties of Engineering (Comillas ICAI) and Law (Comillas ICADE), as well as the San Juan de Dios School of Nursing and Physiotherapy, will also be involved. Thus, mental health will be approached from a multi-disciplinary holistic perspective that seeks to ensure people’s wellbeing in a digitalised environment

About ROVI

ROVI is a pan-European pharmaceutical company specialising and engaging in the research, development, contract manufacturing and marketing of small molecules and biological specialties. The company, which is undergoing a continuous process of international expansion, has subsidiaries in Portugal, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Poland and markets a diversified portfolio of over 40 products.