

**EPF Ad Hoc Group on Ageing and IPA Committee of
Psychoanalytic Perspective on Ageing
in collaboration with IPSO,
International Psychoanalytical Studies Organisation**



**Questionnaire on Ageing Candidate
WHAT THE CANDIDATES SAY**

TOTAL : **37** replies

Data collected from: 13 Candidates of the Australian Psychoanalytical Society (by Maria Teresa Hooke, who also devised the questionnaire)
24 European IPSO Candidates (IPSO European Meeting, Italy, 2009)



Unfortunately, we are no more like that...

What Candidates say about psychoanalytical
perspective on ageing

HOW DID YOU FIRST BECOME INTERESTED IN PSYCHOANALYSIS?

- Through reading 9
- Personal psychoanalytic psychotherapy 5
- During medical studies 5
- At university (psychology-philosophy) 5
- Supervision with analyst 4
- Personal psychoanalysis 3
- Certain acquaintances during life 2

WHAT KIND OF REASONS DID YOU HAVE?

Clusters of replies:

- **A. Cluster : personal needs/personal analysis/knowing my mind deeper = 18**
- **B. Cluster : professional needs/to improve work with patients/it fits with my way of thinking = 10**
- **Cluster (A. + B.) = 4**
(first because of work reasons, then personal needs)
- **Cluster (B. + A.) = 3**
(first because of personal needs, then for work reasons/interests)

Please describe

- I was working already as a psychotherapist but I had personal questions to clarify in a second psychoanalysis
- In order to have a group context where sharing clinical and intellectual experiences (2 replies)
- My personal experience as an analytic patient has had a very positive influence in my wish to “learn” the skills and help others accordingly. Psychoanalysis had proven to be very effective on me and it did also fit the person and the professional I am.

WHAT KIND OF CAUSES MADE YOU APPLY AT THE TIME YOU DID?

- **Cluster A. Personal reasons : 11**
- **Cluster B. Practical reasons : 10**

Please describe

- Age, wanted to train earlier and stay with the same analyst
- My first choice was the child psychoanalysis, so I did when I was younger.
- I benefited a lot of my own analyses and was very curious to perform analyses myself, to get to know the deepest inner world of other people
- I begun my first analysis when I was 26 years old for personal reasons together with my decision to become a psychoanalyst. Because I was not aware of the different psychoanalytic institutes, I begun my first psychoanalysis with a non Freudian analyst. I applied (...) when I was 27 years old but they did not accept me. One of the analysts told me that I was too young and I had better finish first my first analysis and come back later. I did so.
- I was waiting to finish university and to have money for sessions. When this happened, I started.
- I could afford it economically, my motivation was already there

- I wanted that as soon as possible, and when I graduated, one year after I applied, I waited one more year for my analyst to make space in schedule and I started
- Life circumstances have changed
- A real need of personal analysis
- I has been refused once time
- I was almost at the end of my personal analysis so I had more time for my formation
- Life events: moving to another country and having to learn a new language
- I wanted to become a psychoanalyst
- My analyst formulated the idea that I might be a good analyst myself, and the idea started to live in my mind.
- I was a psychiatrist, and I had done about seven years of personal analysis with a senior psychoanalyst when I asked...
- After my infantile training I felt that I was ready for the adult training

WHAT DETERRED YOU FROM APPLYING EARLIER?

- Economic factors 16
- Internal factors 6
- Fear of not being accepted 3
- Family considerations 3
- Other: 7

WHEN YOU APPLIED, DID YOU CONSIDER PSYCHOANALYTIC TRAINING AS:

- Interest and curiosity for the human mind 9
- Develop oneself 8
- Develop professional skills 7
- Completion of education 6
- Career choice 6

WHAT YOU THINK ARE THE MAJOR FACTORS WHICH DETER PEOPLE FROM APPLYING AT ALL?

- **Emotional:** demands of training and of the profession of analysts 16
- **Economic:** cost of analysis and training 12
- **Sociocultural:** diminished status of psychoanalysis in the community 6

Please describe

- Training no longer seen as exciting and new
- People are unaware of psychoanalysis
- People see psychoanalysis as conservative and not catering for the broader community
- Lack of communication about what psychoanalysts do
- Psychoanalysts regarded as having no place in modern day mental health
- I think that this training has to be considered the top so I disagree with the idea to open it for young people without any experience, this can reduce either the level of the group and expose to the risk of the external image that a candidate can give of the Institution.
- I think that the increased importance of earning time and money nowadays deters from the very lengthy and costly psychoanalytic training but I still think that, in my personal history, the way the first psychoanalysts treated me during the first interviews was deterrent also. (...)
- Time consuming: nowadays people want it all and want it fast. Psychoanalysis does not fit the “quick fix” needs.

SOME PEOPLE HOLD THE VIEW THAT PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETIES SEND THE SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONSIDERED NOT MATURE ENOUGH AND HAVING NOT ENOUGH LIFE EXPERIENCE TO APPLY TO BECOME A PSYCHOANALYST. DO YOU THINK IS TRUE?

- YES 15
- NO 15
- MAYBE 4

Please describe

- When you look around it is a body of people who are older, in response you feel too young, that you must wait.
- I heard that older people were preferred
- The application process may have discouraged many young applicant
- Regardless of age, we all have had an 'early emotional life experience ' and this can allow us to begin thinking about the work
- I think it's both true and not. If you're young and you feel ready and convinced to become a psychoanalyst I think nobody will stop you. However, if you feel uncertain about your choice it's easier to listen to subliminal messages that can withhold you from applying.
- Perhaps the training is an "infantile" situation.
- I think this is of the main faults of the psychoanalytic training, because it deters the most active from becoming analysts young enough to innovate the psychoanalytic institutes.
- Perhaps there is an overlap between the idea of the role of the psychoanalyst and the paternal/maternal features that the therapist is supposed to have for such a difficult task.
- First of all, I really don't think that the message is subliminal; in some cases it is plain out evident. It is difficult to make way if you don't have already some experience (and in some cases quite a lot of experience).

- I never did not get that kind of message from my society, maybe because of social and historic concept of living in my country (an eastern country), so the criteria of “maturing” is different
- Obviously it’s a mistake to generalize but I think that it should be better to have also some years of clinical experience before starting the psychoanalytic training
- My young age has been considered in positive way
- I think it depends from the single person, but it is quiet true that life’ s experience, if are thought deeply, can make more responsible.
- It’s a controversial issue... I firmly believe it is an important plus to have broad clinical experience in the field of psychiatry or psychology before entering the profession of psychoanalyst. And experience can only take time...
- I made the first selection when I was 27, and the second when I was 29. I had fear to being considered too young, but I was accepted as Candidate. During the training, many teachers say to us that the Society needs young analysts, and I think this is true.
- This is an important and a difficult question. The thing, is, in any case, that the members of the society are quite old. Already this fact is a message.
- I see a strong effort to accommodate the young encoming candidates to make the training-period more pleasant (and in that sense more normal)

DO YOU THINK THAT AMONG THE TRADITIONAL PROFESSION OF MEDICINE PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK BECOMING A PSYCHOANALYST IS STILL SEEN AS A FEASIBLE CAREER CHOICE, AS FAR AS EARNING A LIVING IS CONCERNED?

- NO 18
- YES 13
- MAYBE 2

Please describe

- In psychology it is still seen as a prestigious profession
- In psychiatry totally devalued
- Why not? There's a lot of work to do!
- The status of psychoanalyst isn't good valued as long time ago.
- Once you do become an analyst, people who need psychoanalytical help do come. Older colleagues send patients to other colleagues.
- In my country it is difficult to start psychoanalytic training if you don't have another job (in hospital, or as psychotherapist) because of the cost of training analysis. It is difficult to find patients for analysis, it is easier to find patients for psychotherapy at one or two sessions for week
- Psychoanalysis seems to be in contrast with short/fast therapy that people ask for (and other profession believes to be effective...)
- I wish it was but like lots of other colleagues, I am finding it increasingly difficult to find patients willing to invest so much time and money on themselves. And it depends very much on which kind of social circles one gets to work.

YOU CONSIDER A POSSIBLE DETERRENT THE FACT THAT PSYCHOANALYTIC INSTITUTES DON'T GIVE AN OFFICIAL DEGREE EQUIVALENT TO A UNIVERSITY MASTER?

- NO 20
- YES 14

Please describe:

- "a doctorate in psychoanalysis would be very attractive to many"
- "It would be helpful, but the general negative attitude at university is a major deterrent"
- "irrelevant issue"
- "for security I would prefer University recognition"
- " an academic equivalent could be a Ph.D"

HAVE YOU BEEN AN OFFICE HOLDER IN SUCH ORGANISATION?

- NO 27
- YES 6

DO YOU THINK THAT IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR SOMEONE WHO OCCUPIED SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS IN OTHER ORGANITATIONS TO BECOME A “STUDENT” AGAIN AND BEING SUPERVISED OR TAUGHT BY A PEER OR SOMETIMES EVEN A YOUNGER PEER?

- NO 19
- YES 10
- MAYBE 4

THERE HAS BEEN ANY DISCUSSION IN IPSO ABOUT THE AGE OF CANDIDATES?

- NO 8
- YES 5
- Don't know 10

Comments and further considerations for future research on ageing

- Are candidates aware of their choices?
- Do candidates feel or fear to be too young? What do they know about their Societies' consideration about young and older candidates?
- Is there room to discuss it among different generations? What fantasies are hidden or conscious behind?
- Emotional factors/economical factors/fear of not being accepted: what kind of economical factors are we talking about?
- The contradictory message: we need young people to make psychoanalysis go on/we don't accept young people, so we have to grow older before applying and then we are too old to grow into the real Society and be creative

“What troubles the Big Human Family is that everybody want stobe the Father”, Mafalda by Quino

