

## Special Session 1

### Professionalising Implementation Science and Implementation (Support) Practice: Do we need practice standards? A European Debate.

**Facilitator:** *Pauline Goense, The Netherlands Implementation Collective (NIC)*

**Discussants:** *Sven Geelen, The Netherlands Implementation Collective (NIC); Tom Jefford, UK Implementation Society; Rahel Naef, Swiss Implementation Science Network (IMPACT); Marie-Therese Schultes, Implementierungsnetzwerk für Forschung & Praxis (INFo↔P); Ashley Boers and Nathalie Pauwen, Belgium Implementation Network*

#### Background

Implementation science aims to increase our understanding of how to promote the uptake of evidence in practice, ultimately maximising impact on health. The quality of implementation science depends on skilled researchers capable of conducting rigorous and relevant implementation research and skilled implementation (support) practitioners capable of applying implementation science knowledge effectively across diverse health services and care settings.

The demand for both types of expertise has grown, leading to an increasing number of structured education and training offers, and other efforts to develop the implementation science and practice workforce.

This growth raises a question about “professional standards”. Establishing clear standards for implementation knowledge and competencies can help ensure the quality and credibility of implementation efforts while also aiding the recognition of implementation science and practice as a key discipline in health services and care settings. Uniting as a professional community could foster shared learning, promote standards of practice, and enable organisations to better identify and recruit skilled implementation scientists and (support) practitioners.

#### The session

This interactive session is for anyone involved in implementation science and practice with an interest in the professionalisation of the field of implementation.

We will discuss whether the (inter)national implementation science and practice community should work to establish professional associations and what these associations should encompass:

- 1) What is the value of evolving into a (inter-)national professional association for implementation scientists and implementation support practitioners?
- 2) What should professional associations entail if they were to be developed?

Participants will collectively explore the strengths and weaknesses of evolving into an (inter-)national professional association for implementation scientists and implementation (support) practitioners and, together, identify opportunities to strengthen the current infrastructure for implementation science and for fostering its professional credibility across a wide range of health services and care settings.