



# AAIMHI NEWSLETTER

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## Guidelines for contributors

AAIMHI aims to publish quarterly editions in March, June, September and December. Contributions to the newsletter are invited on any matter of interest to the members of AAIMHI.

Referenced works should follow the guidelines provided by the APA Publication Manual 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.

All submissions are sub-edited to newsletter standards.

Articles are accepted preferably as Word documents sent electronically. Send to Shelley Reid at email:

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## Australian Association for Infant Mental Health Inc. National Presidents Report for the AGM September 10, 2006 Melbourne

### Our National Development

With the relocation of this president from an urban centre with a population of 5 million to a humble regional community with a population of some 2,600 people, has come the realisation of what such a downsize can add to the quality of life. And so comes the realisation of the difficulties faced by people living in rural and remote areas. The focus over the next year for this president will be the determination to work outside the comfort zone of familiarity, and extend to the less comfortable realities of what we don't see in the media.

The year ahead for AAIMHI will reflect the attention and capacity given to the association by all of us who are a part of its existence. With the changing times and the reality of how to best prioritise time, it has become more obvious to me of the need to draw on technology to assist us in our daily lives. I have always maintained a strong belief in the attributes of technology and have championed its use within the administration of AAIMHI. I believe it is now the time to utilise technology as a resource to strengthen the communication responsibilities and management of AAIMHI across our national framework.

I have been exploring the possibilities of a national database linked to our website to strengthen the performance of the dedicated members who selflessly give their time to administration, advocacy, and correspondence.

We have had a very interesting past

year with the invitation last February to represent the organization at the Senate Inquiry Standing Committee on Family and Human Services, see <[www.aph.gov.au/hansard/rep/commtee/R9144.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/rep/commtee/R9144.pdf)> This president did his best to represent the interests of all Australian Infants and their Families to a tough table of polities.

We saw the launch of the Second Position Paper *Responding to Babies' Cues* (see our website [www.aaimhi.org](http://www.aaimhi.org)). I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those responsible for the development and creation of this very important policy document, particularly Beth Macgregor and Robin Grille (NSW). Thank you.

### Congratulations

Congratulations goes to Pam Linke AM from South Australia who is the recipient of the 2006 WAIMH Sonya Bemporad Award. This is given in recognition of significant contributions to the advancement of social and public policies that lead to the improved mental health and overall benefit of infants, toddlers, and their families. Nominees typically are not involved in service delivery or scientific or clinical studies of infants. Legislators, officials, advocates, media representatives, foundation directors, and concerned citizens may qualify for the award.

### Membership

Our membership has remained static with around 442 members including 14 international members. The paid-up

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members seem to underscore the performance of their state counterparts. The ambition to improve membership communication and administration remains the principal ambition for this president. This year will also be a year of reconnecting with members at all levels.

### Strategic Planning Morning

Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of November will be the day when the National Executive gathers to determine our future. We will meet in Sydney to develop a Strategic Plan for the Association's future. I would be delighted if you would like to be a part of this process. Please contact me on 0418 231 635 or by email at victorevatt@bigpond.com if you would like to be involved.

Looking forward to the year ahead.

### Victor Evatt

National President

## AAIMHI Newsletter

### Editor's Report, AGM September 2006

This past year has seen the production of four newsletters with good quality content. I would like to thank all contributors, particularly those who have submitted state reports regularly. Quarterly issues require sustained, cooperative effort from many people and not just a few.

I would like to thank Trish Sullivan for her assistance in providing copy, and Beulah Warren for directing students to the newsletter for publishing small articles.

While reprinting articles from other publications will provide more copy, I feel there is also a need to publish original works so that the individual voice of AAIMHI is not overshadowed and the function of the newsletter demoted. In addition, there are the issues of copyright and duplicate publication, and in these matters I am guided by the policies of the International Council of Medical Journal Editors.

Technical production of the newsletter has not been an issue, with timely posting on the website.

In summary, the newsletter is in better shape than last year and I am more than happy to continue as editor, based on the continued assistance of the state branches. I believe the newsletter is an important part of what AAIMHI offers to members and it would be worthwhile maintaining our efforts to sustain production.

### Shelley Reid

RN RM BAppSc(Nursing) BA(Psych) Postgrad Dip Editing and Publishing

## BOOK REVIEW

### Clinical Skills in Infant Mental Health

Sarah Mares, Louise Newman, Beulah Warren, Karen Cornish.

ACER Press, 2005.

The field of Infant Mental Health can trace its origins to a number of sources, some more obvious than others. Winnicott, Bowlby and various psychoanalysts come to mind as well as the subsequent research on caregiver-infant attachment patterns by Ainsworth and Main. But infant mental health also owes as much to developments as diverse as the advent of the portable video camera and computer, which enables microsecond analysis of mother-infant interaction, the widespread use of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale in routine postnatal settings (and now antenatal settings) and biological research into the effects of stress hormones such as cortisol on the developing brain of the foetus and infant.

A wide variety of disciplines now find that they have an interface with infant

mental health. If we listed just a few of these fields we would include biological psychiatry and brain development, infant trauma and subsequent personality disturbances, attachment theory, psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, mothercraft and parenting practices across different cultures, social and preventative psychiatry and even politics and economics, if we think about issues such as paid maternity leave.

Since the early days of psychoanalysis the field of infant mental health has been a fertile ground for etiological theories and it is where we still intuitively expect to find many of the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle regarding adult mental health and psychopathology. The shift more recently has been towards the biological realm where we are on the threshold of understanding how the infant's early, everyday expe-

riences in co-regulation with caregivers (as well as traumatic experiences) might affect their emerging neuronal development, for good or ill.

Meanwhile, at the local clinic, babies and their parents present with clinical problems that need a solution regardless of the ramifications for the future. It is into this research world and the world of the clinician that the book, *Clinical Skills in Infant Mental Health*, arrives. Many clinicians, including general practitioners, child and family nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists, will have some contact with new mothers (and fathers) and their infants and toddlers. They would all find great benefit in reading this book.

Professionals commonly see infants who have difficulties with feeding or

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sleeping and/or settling. Here the infant is definitely the focus of the therapeutic endeavour and this is as it should be given that the infant's difficulties are often very real. But such difficulties are never in isolation. They are often a manifestation of a relationship difficulty between the mother (or father) and their infant. Most clinicians are aware of this yet it is surprising how little therapeutic effort may be directed towards the issues of the parent's internal working models of relationships, or caregiver-infant co-regulation or the infant's attachment relationships.

We see the opposite situation as well. Sometimes, in fact all too often, it is the infant who is very much the silent partner in the therapeutic endeavour, out of sight and out of mind. A common scenario might be that of a mother (and occasionally a father) being treated for a postnatal psychological disorder, or an adverse social situation with little reference made to the infant or its plight. *Clinical Skills in Infant Mental Health* helps the clinician to put the infant and their relationship with the caregiver at the centre stage.

The authors have impressive credentials. The book brings together three principal clinicians: two psychiatrists, Dr Sarah Mares and Dr Louise Newman, and psychologist Ms Beulah Warren, a pioneer in early intervention programs with infants and their families. They are aided by their editorial assistant Ms Karen Cornish. Also the contributions of other clinicians who teach in the NSW Institute of Psychiatry's Graduate Diploma and Masters courses in Infant Mental Health are acknowledged as being integrated into the book's chapters.

*Clinical Skills in Infant Mental Health* is a book that focuses on the clinical mindset required for successful work with infants and their families. There are other books in infant mental health, the *Handbook of Infant Mental Health* and the *Handbook of Attachment* come to mind, but *Clinical Skills in Infant Mental Health* has a more obvious clinical focus and is to my mind more user-friendly. The format of the book makes

it clear as to which chapters will have the information you need. One can turn to a chapter dealing with a clinical problem such as Postnatal Depression or Parents with Substance Abuse and in so doing the reader will find all the essential information in a relatively compact form. You can dip in and out of the book quickly and with good results.

I personally like a number of aspects of the book. Firstly, the book has a focus on attachment issues, an increasingly central issue in infant mental health. Bowlby created a stir in psychoanalysis many decades ago but there is now very little resistance to his ideas in psychoanalytic journals today. The various infant-caregiver attachment patterns are well described in early chapters and the book continues to highlight attachment issues in subsequent chapters.

Secondly, this book focuses on the infant's experiences of trauma and the need for early intervention, both areas that are important in current psychiatric research. To put it more broadly the book focuses on adversity and links this with attachment trauma. There are chapters on parents abused as children, parents with personality disorder and families with multiple adversities.

Thirdly, the book is very well illustrated through the extensive use of case studies. Certainly the cases will ring true to most clinicians. They not only illustrate the clinical difficulties but they act as a teaching vehicle by indicating the various pieces of information that are relevant in arriving at a case formulation. They show both the variety of presentations and also the variations in outcome. The chapter on adolescent parenting for example has two cases, one demonstrating a more favourable outcome and the other where the outcome is less than ideal.

Finally, the book has a focus on formulation, assessment and management which is a theme repeated throughout the chapters. Of course most clinical books have a chapter on formulation and assessment but by their nature chapters devoted to such a topic tend

to be lengthy and at times over-inclusive. This book does away with such problems by having an individual formulation, assessment and management section forming the conclusion to each chapter. This then enables the authors to be more focussed and the reader will find the information much more relevant to the clinical problem.

In conclusion, this is a very good book. It quite ambitiously attempts to cover the whole gamut of infant mental health and it does so very well. It maintains a clinical focus and is also very easy to read. It judiciously leaves out some of the theorising of the larger 'handbooks' and in so doing keeps itself to just over 300 pages. I could well imagine later editions being larger and eventually one might see the book split into two volumes.

In the meantime I would advise the reader to take up this book on infant mental health while it is presented in such a friendly form. The reader gets the advantage of a 'course' in infant mental health and, almost certainly, infants and their families will be better helped with their difficulties.

**Ian Harrison**

AAIMHI-NSW

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## STATE REPORTS

### Victoria

The Victorian Branch AGM was held on 15 August and the first meeting of the new committee followed on the 30 August 2006. Brigid Jordan resumes the mantle of President. Particular thanks to Kerry Judd for her excellent past work as Treasurer, as Kerry is stepping down from the Committee.

Melbourne is pleased to be hosting the IACAPAP conference 10 - 14 September, including the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health with international guest speakers Tuula Tamminen (Finland), Charles Zeanah (United States), Marie Rose Moro (France), Miri Keren and Sam Tyano (Israel).

Monthly Scientific Meetings have settled in at the new venue in the Seminar Room at AMREP Education Centre, the Alfred Hospital, Commercial Rd, Prahran. Looking forward, the next meeting on 2 October will be a joint session with VAPP and VCPA to be held at VAPP rooms in Richmond. Also to advise that there will be no meeting on the 17 October.

Quite a few members made the trek to Paris for the World Congress, which gave us a smorgasbord of intellectual offerings (even if the culinary offerings were a little sparse!) Several members presented at different forums including Symposia, Video Presentations and Poster Presentations and all were very well received. We hope to be able to present some of these at future meetings.

### NSW

Greetings from the new NSW president. I would like to thank the outgoing president Ian Harrison for the outstanding job he did in his two years in the chair, he of course is still with us on the committee.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 26 July and the following new office bearers were elected, congratulations to all.

President: Patricia Glossop

Vice President: Brian Hunt

Members: Susan Priest, Tanya Wright

Marianne Nicholson is continuing as treasurer, Martha Birch is continuing as secretary and Kate Donohoe is continuing as membership secretary. Other members continuing are Shelley Reid, Sharon Laing, Kim Warner, Ian Harrison, Beulah Warren, Mary Morgan, Rudi Crncec, Beth McGregor and Robin Grille. Elke Andrees and Stephan Juan have stepped down, many thanks for their contributions.

In 2007 it is the turn of NSW to hold the AAIMHI national conference and the theme will be 'connections'. We are hoping for a good mixture of Australian and overseas guest speakers. The conference committee is looking for ideas and speakers for this event so please contact Shelley Reid with your thoughts: [shelley.reid@email.cs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:shelley.reid@email.cs.nsw.gov.au) or phone 02 9515 7845.

Recently I was involved in the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Conference held at Homebush Bay, 4 - 6 of May, titled *Old Families New Beginnings*. It was the culmination of a busy year for all of the people involved on the committee. The conference was very well attended, was pronounced an outstanding success and provided a worthwhile and stimulating forum by everyone with whom I spoke. I want to thank AAIMHI-NSW for their generous support of the conference.

AAIMHI-NSW is conducting a series of eight lectures in the middle of 2007 covering infant mental health and will be beneficial to those new to the field or for anyone wanting a refresher. This will be advertised widely early next year.

### Patricia Glossop

President, AAIMHI-NSW

## STATE REPORTS (cont.)

### South Australia

The SA Branch has continuing interest in membership and has a very committed and hard working committee. At our AGM the committee was re-elected with two new members. Mary Hood has taken over Elizabeth Puddy's role as treasurer with Kim Tomlian as membership secretary.

We have had a busy year in the SA branch.

### Education

Our major ongoing education initiative was organising the Circle of Security workshops with Kent Hoffman in February 2006. These were a resounding success. The 10-day workshop was filled and over 200 people attended the 2-day workshop. The spirituality workshop had about 70 attendees and was greatly appreciated by all who attended. Feedback from these workshops was the most positive that we have ever had from an education initiative. The Branch used some of the profit from the Kent Hoffman workshops to sponsor members to a one-day workshop with Daniel Hughes on working with Attachment Disordered Children.

Branch presentations during the year were given on the Paris Attachment conference and the World Resiliency Conference.

The SA Branch of AAIMHI also sponsored the Helen Mayo lecture in association with the CYWHS national parenting conference. The lecture theatre was filled with about 130 parents and professionals attending the lecture by Professor James McKenna on infant sleep. A DVD of the lecture was made and is available from the Child Protection Department of the Women's and Children's Hospital through Jenny Patten.

The State Branch has offered a scholarship to assist students of the Graduate Diploma of Infant Mental Health. This year three students, Joanne Bros, Alma O'Donnell and Gerry Gummow were assisted through this grant.

The branch supported Cheryl Rothwell to attend the Aboriginal Attachment conference in NSW.

### Advocacy

Our advocacy with national inquiries over the years has resulted in AAIMHI being invited to make submissions to inquiries, the latest being the inquiry into work and family.

A letter was sent to the Premier regarding the need to highlight early childhood in the State Strategic Plan and a positive response was received.

Comments re Infant Mental Health aspects of the Raising Children website were sent to the developers of the site. There are still concerns about some aspects of the site and we will continue our advocacy.

Donnie Martin, via the Australian Association of Social Workers, has advocated strongly for infant mental health and early intervention in the Inclusion Inquiry.

There is a need to do more advocacy in South Australia now that the pressures of the education initiatives are off. Also we need to link more strongly with the national Child and Adolescent Mental Health Association.

Controlled crying: an article has appeared in *Practical Parenting* (Sept 2005) on controlled crying and refers to our position paper. We sent a letter applauding their stand.

Sally Watson attended the Mental Health Inquiry to put forward the importance of Infant Mental Health, on their invitation to make a face to face submission after our written submission.

The South Australian branch has had support from The Children Youth and Women's Health Service, the Flinders Medical Centre Child Protection service and the Women's and Children's Hospital Child Protection Service. In particular we appreciate the work of Debra from FMC who does our mail

outs and has spent a lot of time re-formatting the membership database. All of this support has been most valuable to our committee.

The importance of infant mental health is being more recognised in professional circles than ever before but there is still a great need for advocacy and education and those are roles that this branch has carried out well in the past and needs to continue.

### Pam Linke

Branch President

August 2006.