



**INVITATION MARCH 13 and 14 2015**

***DAIMH and WAIMH Flanders exist 10 years and join hands together.***

***Two-Day Anniversary Conference***

***" Parent-child - brain in Motion"***

On **March 13 and 14 2015** our **Two-Day Anniversary Conference** will take place at **"Koningshof" in Veldhoven (The Netherlands)**. This conference is organized by the Dutch and Flemish Affiliates of WAIMH to jointly celebrate the 10th anniversary of both associations. The conference promises to be not only a scientific and societal event, but also a lively encounter with colleagues. We welcome you in the heart of the wooded "Kempen".

From a **multidisciplinary framework, the role of social relations in the early development of babies and young children** will be discussed. What does it mean to be born as a baby in a relational world that appears increasingly complex and diverse? How do babies and (very) young children actively engage with their relational environment? What is the impact of these experiences at the **genetic level** or on **neurophysiological** and **social development**? How can we use this knowledge in our clinical practice? What are the current views in the Netherlands and Belgium regarding to Infant Mental Health-care?

Based on their latest findings, some **inspiring international and local speakers** will develop and discuss several topics in these fascinating but complex domains.

#### **DAY 1**

During our first day, the focus will be on **the interpersonal development** of the unborn and (very) young child, considered from an **evolutionary-epigenetic perspective**. It will be demonstrated how environmental factors interact with the development of heredity, brain and behavior - and vice versa - and by how these mechanisms can overarch several generations. The dynamics and psychophysiological experience of touching and being touched ("social touch" hypothesis) will be explored. Links will be made with the current state of art of **evidence-based IMH treatment**.

#### **DAY 2**

Our second day will explore how **early relational dynamics** come to life between adults and babies in both **clinical and non-clinical** populations. The mosaic of rhythm, harmony, expression, narrative and other intuitive micro-mechanisms that are characteristic of a parent-infant interaction will be discussed from a **cross-cultural, ethological and psychophysiological perspective**.

Moreover, it will be discussed how similar micro-mechanisms in non-human primates could be a source of information to understand human analogous relationships.

The conference will be concluded with a societal **debate** in which some **pioneers of IMH-care** in the Low Countries foresee the future of Infant Mental Health in Flanders and the Netherlands.

Besides this inspiring scientific program, the conference will also provide several opportunities to meet colleagues, among others during the official dinner on the first day of the conference, or even better at the dance party organized by the DAIMH after this dinner.

All useful information on programs and registration can be found on our websites: <http://www.waimh-vlaanderen.be/lustrumconferentie> and <http://www.daimh.nl/pages/nl/activiteiten>

One can also download the pdf files containing all the necessary information.

Sincerely,  
Board DAIMH and WAIMH-Vlaanderen vzw

## Conference Program

### **Day 1** Friday March 13 2015

- 9h00            **Reception and registration** with coffee and tea
- 10h00           **Opening by the presidents of DAIMH and WAIMH Flanders**  
President DAIMH: This feature is currently vacant  
President WAIMH Flanders: Saskia Desmedt special educationalist and experiential child therapist Outpatient clinic for Infant Psychiatry University Hospital Brussels
- 10h15           **Introduction by the chair Mr. Marcel Schmeets.** He was founder, among others, and first president of the board of the Dutch Association for Infant Mental Health.
- 10h30           **The emotional state of the mother during pregnancy and offspring brain development and behavior: the state of the art.**  
*Prof. Dr. Bea van den Bergh, Professor of Developmental Psychology, Tilburg University; Honorary Research Professor of Health Psychology, University of Leuven; senior researcher Research Department of Health, Welfare and Family Affairs, Brussels, Flanders.*
- In this presentation, we give an overview of important findings regarding the influence of maternal emotions during pregnancy - namely anxiety, stress, depression and mindfulness - on offspring brain and behavior development. We explain the relevance of epigenetic mechanisms.. We illustrate how brain and behaviour development can be studied in the infant in the first year of life.
- 11h30           **Break** with coffee and tea
- 12h00           **Touch and the Developing Social Brain**  
*Prof. dr. Francis McGlone, Professor in Neuroscience, School of Natural Sciences & Psychology, Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom*
- Recent research has shown that some skin nerves (c-tactile afferents or CTs) send 'feel good' signals to the brain when activated by gentle touch, and how this kind of

touch may be all-important in developing a healthy 'social brain' and in sustaining human relationships. Tactile research has focused mainly on the fingertips where information from mechanosensory receptors is conveyed to sensory areas of the brain by fast-conducting nerve fibres, enabling this information to be processed in 'real-time' – an important factor when handling objects or tools. However touch has another dimension, beyond the purely discriminative, an affective and affiliative one. We have described a system of highly sensitive slowly-conducting peripheral nerves that respond to nurturing/pleasant touch. CTs are only found in hairy skin (the main body area) and have not been found in the glabrous skin of the hands. This presentation will describe research that has characterised the structure and function of CTs using psychophysical measures, microneurography recordings, and functional neuroimaging techniques. These data provide support for the functional role of a body-based emotional touch system – one that underpins the rewarding aspects of nurturing, affiliative, and social touch – leaving the hands to 'touch' while the body 'feels'. It is proposed that CTs play a fundamental and critical role in the development of the neurotypical brain.

13h00 **Lunch**

14h00 **Poster Presentations "Researchers meet clinicians"**

14h30 **Epigenetics and other forms of heredity in evolutionary**

*Drs. Marcel Schmeets is a child and adolescent psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. His interest is in the interface between psychoanalysis, early development and neuroscience. He was founder, among others, and first president of the board of the Dutch Association for Infant Mental Health. Recently he established together with Ariëtte Reekum the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Neuropsychoanalyse (NVNPSA). He is working in private practice and at De Waag Amersfoort*

In this presentation will be shown how our genes are only determining part of our heredity. Apart from epigenetics, and the specific behaviour and the (capacity for) symbolic variation (cf thinking and the use of language) contribute to heredity. During evolution on a certain moment ontologic development has evolved. Since then nature makes use of more than only genetic heredity. Our thinking about the development of psychopathology needs adaptation to these insights.

15h30 **Break** with coffee and tea

16h00 **The early parent-child-relationship: research and practice**

*Prof. Dr. Hedwig van Bakel, Extraordinary professor Infant Mental Health, University of Tilburg; Infant Mental Health Specialist Centre Dimence; Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Herlaarhof, the Netherlands*

During these last decades the amount of research on the early parent-child-relationship has increased tremendously. There is increasing learns about the importance and about factors affecting its quality. Has this also led to more tools for practice and to more evidence-based interventions to adjust and optimize the parent-child relationship? This lecture discusses this subject.

17h00 **Closing remarks by the chair Mr. Marcel Schmeets**

17h15 **Drinks**

19h00 **Conference dinner**

21h00 **Anniversary party**

You are invited to a dance party hosted by DAIMH.

## **Day 2      Saturday March 14 2015**

9h30            **Reception and registration** with coffee and tea

10h00          **Introduction by the chair Mrs. Martine van Puyvelde.** She is in the board of WAIMH Flanders

10h15          **Moving to connect - Connect to move: Relational harmony and rhythm as the basis for psycho-physiological regulation**

*Dr. Martine Van Puyvelde, assistant Vrije Universiteit Brussel, postdoctoral researcher Royal Military Academy Brussels, recognized Marital & Family therapist, musician, Flanders*

Movement. Growth. Development. Change. Based on the theoretical work of Daniel Stern (eg, 2004), we might consider this collection of terms as a basis for interpersonal contact. But conversely this interpersonal contact shows the undercurrent of movement, its growth and development. Above all these are the essential ingredients of music. Music as we would analyze it from a score or as it arises during a meeting between a baby and an adult. Harmony and melody in vocal exchanges and rhythm and timing in physiological processes additionally turn out to be indications of a successful emotional co-regulation between parents and babies and boost the development of the baby. When interpersonal processes threaten to fall silent, as with postnatal depression, the language of music is evident, therefore, to provide a powerful opening to new vitality and connection. In this presentation the micro world of connection between parent and baby will be illustrated with video and audio material.

11h15          **Break** with coffee and tea

11h45          **The mirror mechanism during development: EEG investigations in infant macaque monkeys**

*Dra. Fabrizia Festante, PhD Student, University of Parma, Italy and University of Maryland, College Park, USA*

This presentation will review a series of recent electroencephalographic (EEG) findings in newborn rhesus macaques. These findings support the hypothesis that a cortical mirror mechanism may emerge and operate in the early stages of postnatal development for both observation and imitation of facial gestures (lip smacking and tongue protrusion) as well as for the observation of goal-directed actions. Furthermore, our findings suggest that this cortical mechanism may be dependent on early social experience.

12h45          **Lunch**

13h45          **Poster Presentations "Clinicians meet Researchers"**

14h15          **What maternal psychopathology can teach us about the development of communication in early infancy**

*Prof. Maya Gratier, Professor of developmental Psychology, Laboratory of Ethology, Cognition & Development, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre, France*

I will present findings from a series of studies of social interaction between both mothers with borderline personality disorder and healthy mothers and their 3-to-6-month-old infants. In particular, these studies focus on communication processes involved in vocal interaction, such as turn-taking, acoustic quality of infant-directed speech and narrative organization. Comparison of early social interactions of mothers with and without psychopathology sheds light on the specific communication processes that enable mothers and infants develop "ways of being together" in and over time. Empirical findings will be supported by both video and audio illustrations taken from naturalistic interactions between mothers with and without psychopathology and their infants.

15h15        **Break** with coffee and tea

15h45        **Debate** led by Mr. Marcel Karreman

*Dhr. Marcel Karreman, moderator, adviser, trainer CHIMP - Change & Impact Amsterdam*

Pioneers of IMH-care in the Low Countries discuss the future of Infant Mental Health in Flanders and the Netherlands. This debate is led by Mr. Marcel Karreman. As a moderator, he knows how to connect people and groups, and he can elicit interesting or illustrative stories from the audience.

16h45        **Closing remarks by the chair Mrs. Martine van Puyvelde**

17h00        **Closing remarks by the presidents of DAIMH and WAIMH Flanders**

17h15        **Drinks**