



ISPOG

International Society of Psychosomatic
Obstetrics and Gynaecology



2020 WINTER NEWSLETTER



We are pleased to bring ISPOG members a winter edition of the Newsletter. It contains a message from the President, a report from the ExCo meeting in November, an announcement of ISPOG 2022, an update on the research agenda and the conference agenda for the coming months,

Message from the ISPOG President

The ink had not dried on my last end-of-year message when the virus SARS-CoV-2 made its inglorious entry into our world and a new disease, COVID-19, was born. Twelve months on, the perception is that there has never been a year like the Covid-ravaged 2020. In reality, we are experiencing a reprise of what our forebears went through in the 1918 influenza pandemic and other historic pandemics.

For despite all the scientific and technological advances of the last 100 years, the interventions applied to constrain the COVID-19 pandemic are in essence no different from those introduced in 1918-1920: facemasks, social distancing, quarantines, shelter-in-place orders and lockdowns. In other words, we have so far had to rely not on technology but on psychosocial interventions; not so much on medicines as on measures that call for behavioural adaptation.

The pandemic has also unmasked, if not accentuated, inequalities in health care globally, with disproportionate distribution of mortality and morbidity in under-privileged populations. There is evidence of a global increase in domestic violence, especially against women. The United Nations has also reported that COVID-19 could reverse the progress that has been made on gender equality and women's rights. A predictive model based on the best available evidence has predicted that close to 20% of the UK population will need either new or additional mental health support as a direct consequence of the pandemic.

Science has lived up to its reputation by producing a vaccine for COVID-19 in record time. For optimal impact, however, uptake of the vaccine has to be impressive. However, in a survey conducted by Reuters/Ipsos in the USA (a country ravaged by the pandemic) in the first week of this month, 1 in every 3 women said they were not keen on having the vaccine.

All of this draws global attention to the core message that ISPOG has championed since its inception five decades ago: that the delivery of health care entails more than just medical science; that health care should integrate biological factors with psychological and social factors. The shift of attention is most welcome, but attention should be attended by action. A post-pandemic plan of action is called for.

This should address issues of health inequalities, gaps in mental health care, social and behaviour change communication, and provision of psychological support for frontline health workers.

ISPOG will continue to draw attention to these issues through its advocacy activities, and match this with action through its activities in the education and research domains.

I wish our Christian members a Merry Christmas, and to all members I say Happy New Year and may 2021 bring health, happiness and fulfilment.

Warm greetings to all, - Leroy C. Edozien

ISPOG 2022

We hope it will be possible to meet in person in 2022 in Vienna. The ISPOG conference will coincide with the Dreiländertagung in Vienna, Austria from 9-12 March 2022. The meeting will be held at the Sigmund Freud University. The motto is "(Post) Pandemic World: Woman, Family, Society". We have already received many suggestions for speakers and contributions.

CALL for children's drawings on THE WORLD AFTER THE CORONAVIRUS

For the logo for ISPOG 2022, the organising committee is looking for children's drawings that depict "The world after (the) coronavirus" The most beautiful drawings will be used for the conference. We want to invite 3 drawings per country and ask to provide us with the name and the age of the painter. Please send in the drawings to admin@ispog.org and scan them at the highest resolution possible. The deadline for this is January 10th, 2021.

Executive Committee meetings by Zoom

Using the possibilities of Zoom, we met again in November virtually. This time we spoke about the impact of COVID-19 on our work and services. Other topics were ISPOG 2022 in Vienna, Austria. The program for ISPOG 2022 is taking shape. If you still have input from your national society, please **contact us at admin@ispog.org**. We also looked forward to ISPOG 2025 for which the Korean society has proposed to organise it in Seoul, Korea.

The option to hold meetings with Zoom means it is easier to come together and propels the possibilities for our activities. For Spring 2021, we are planning an **Executive Committee meeting combined with a webinar on 14 April 2021**.

Survey for the Educational Committee

The Educational Board of ISPOG would like your opinion about the educational content on our website. Please have a look at the educational slides (*website*) and case-based modules (*website*) on the ISPOG website, and then answer the questions through the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F8MH7FD>

If the link does not work contact either Jonathan Schaffir at Jonathan.Schaffir@osumc.edu or M.Caroline Vos at admin@ispog.org

Update ISPOG research agenda

Our 2019 ISPOG congress in The Hague ran a session debating the global research priorities for psychological and social aspects of women's health. Thanks to the initiative of Julie Quinlivan, co-editor-in-chief of our journal (JPOG), the results of our discussion were presented as an editorial in the first 2020 issue of the JPOG. Six topics reflecting areas of common clinical concern and with gaps in knowledge were identified.

We contacted the responsible co-ordinators and asked for an update regarding the current activities and achievements since October 2019 in the six domains of interest. The short summaries below demonstrate that some actions have been taken, however more interested and experienced colleagues willing to engage themselves and to collaborate are in demand!

Collaborative management of endometriosis (Heather Rowe (heather.rowe@monash.edu): Heather Rowe declared that she is currently fully occupied with an entirely different project. She would be happy to hand over her task as the co-ordinator to someone else with more capacity.

- Your propositions are very welcome, as well!

Male infertility emotional and psychological support (Tewes Wischmann (tewes.wischmann@med.uni-heidelberg.de):

Tewes Wischmann states that the recognition of recurrent pregnancy losses (RPL) as a couple's issue is the crux of a study from [Voss et al. \(Fertility Sterility December 2020\)](#). While women are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, men are also at significant risk of anxiety and social support is generally perceived as limited ([see the editorial comment in Fertility Sterility](#)).

- He and his collaborators encourage other researchers to investigate the men's needs and risk factors concerning mental health in family building issues.

Care provision following birth trauma (Gill Thomas (GThomson@uclan.ac.uk):

Gill Thomas states that he and his collaborators have been working on a study to collect information from different European countries about the policies, practices and training concerning afterbirth support for women who have experienced a traumatic birth. They plan to publish this work next year.

Denial of pregnancy (Antje Bittner (antje.bittner@ukdd.de):

According to Antje Bittner, she and her collaborators have not collected any additional, new data. Currently, they are writing a paper on the role of unresolved trauma in women with a denied pregnancy.

Fertility after cancer (Kiyoshi Takamatsu (ktakamatsu@tdc.ac.jp):

Kiyoshi Takamatsu declares that there is no progress at this time about the topic of fertility after cancer.

- He would like to conduct a survey on the current situation in each country.

Reducing incongruous expectations for childbirth (Yael Benyamini (benyael@tauex.tau.ac.il):

Yael Benyamini states that she has not taken any active measures to initiate a collaboration yet. She is a member of COST Action 18211 ("Perinatal Mental Health and Birth-Related Trauma: Maximizing best practice and optimal outcomes"), in which the topic in question is also concerned.

- She would be happy to learn of other researchers interested in studying this topic across countries.

Renewal of the website

The current website needs updating. ISPOG will be working with Van Tuijns Visuals for this. If you have any input for the new website, please let us know at admin@ispog.org. We are endeavouring to keep your contact details correct and up-to-date.

Please visit the ISPOG website and check the contact details of your national society. If they are not correct, please forward the correct details to the secretary-general admin@ispog.org

Agenda

NASPOG will hold a webinar series August 2020 – August 2021. We will feature 1 webinar per month on the second Thursday of each month at 7pm Eastern (6pm Central/5pm Mountain, 4pm Pacific) starting August 13th. **For the program and registration see** <https://naspog.wildapricot.org/program>

ESSM virtual conference, 19-20 February 2021, <https://www.essm-congress.org/virtual/>

ExCo meeting per Zoom Wednesday 14 April 2021 13.30 h CET, followed by a webinar

DGPFG Conference 50 year anniversary, 11-12 March, Berlin, Germany.
<https://dgpfg.de/weiterbildung/jahrestagung-dgpfg-2021/>

EBCOG, September 2021 via <https://www.ebcog2020.org>

ASPOG 2021, 3-5 September 2021 - Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hindley St, Adelaide

World Conference, International Association Women's Mental Health 20-23 February 2022, Melbourne, Australia

20th ISPOG Congress 2022, 9-12 March 2022, Vienna, Austria

Save the dates!

The ISPOG board wishes you, and your families and colleagues healthy and happy holidays. May 2021 bring us a happier and healthier world.

M.Caroline Vos, Secretary-General on behalf of the ISPOG Board.
