



**ISPOG**  
International Society of Psychosomatic  
Obstetrics and Gynaecology

**December 2018**

# Newsletter

Newsletter Editor Dr Heather Rowe  
Logo based on painting by Omar Biscotti



The end of the year 2018 is approaching. During the course of it I had the opportunity to see some of you at the occasion of the ESC Congress in Budapest, where we held our ExCo meeting. Aside from the exchange with our Hungarian colleagues it allowed us also to build up on our collaboration with the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health. There were other opportunities to meet colleagues, to actively promote the bio-psycho-social approach and to stimulate the foundation of a national society. This was the case at the occasion of the biennial conference of The Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health in Bangalore, India, in which I took part together with our Secretary General, Heather Rowe, and also at the FIGO congress in Rio, Brazil, which I attended in company with our President Elect Leroy Edozien. Furthering education remains a priority and we are very pleased that we could

Contribute the chapter “Communication & Psycho-Social Skills Training” to the Project for Achieving Consensus in Training (PACT) – Curriculum of EBCOG.

This newsletter provides you with more information about Jonathan Schaffir’s latest ideas to enlarge our stock of educational modules as well as a tribute to our much-appreciated colleague and recently-retired professor Shaughn O’Brien. Furthermore you will find reports of past and future activities of several of our national member societies and a list of up-coming events. Most importantly, however, you find an update about our ISPOG congress in October 2019 in The Hague. In our last newsletter I announced the Netherlands as the host of the congress. During the ExCo meeting in May 2018 we met Caroline Vos, the head of the local organizing committee who offered a first choice of teasers. Now the Dutch colleagues present a whole program promising already in advance that it will be “more than the sum of its parts”.

Looking forward to meeting you all next Autumn in The Hague and to sharing with you an unforgettable professional and personal experience.

In the name of the entire ISPOG Board I wish you all the best for the festive season and good start into the New Year.

**Sibil Tschudin**  
ISPOG President





ISPOG ExCo dinner in Budapest May 2019. Countries represented: Hungary, Spain, The Netherlands, Australia, Germany, Switzerland, Ukraine.



## LATEST NEWS FROM THE LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE ISPOG 2019

### Organization

The local organising committee (LOC) of ISPOG 2019 welcomed

Sibil Tschudin to The Hague in early September 2018. We visited the conference location and outlined the conference program.

Many proposals for symposia had been submitted by then and it took us some time to arrange an attractive program that considers every submission and brings together all the specialists of a specific field in the same symposium. In close collaboration with your respective national contact person, the members of the LOC are busy filling in all the details. Furthermore, we want to give the floor also to our young academics by including short communications into the symposia. You can find the scheme of the schedule and the continuously updated program on the congress website <https://www.ispog2019.org/program>.

### Workshops

Lively exchange among the participants and interactivity is a trademark of ISPOG congresses. We want to build on this by offering a large number of workshops. Thanks to the submitted proposals 14 different workshops will be held, which will allow the

attendants to discuss given topics in a small interactive group.

The registration for the workshops will be on a first come, first serve basis. In case of high request and the willingness and disposition of the facilitators, some workshops might be offered repeatedly.

### Registration

Registration for ISPOG2019 has been open since November 1st 2018. The LOC is very happy with early registration and would like to encourage all of you, to register soon.

Please be aware that the hotel rooms will be available on a first come, first serve basis, as well.

You can register

via: <https://www.ispog2019.org/registration>.

### The Hague - city of peace and justice

The LOC welcomes you in the beautiful city of The Hague with its beach and many sites to visit.

The conference dinner as well as the social program on the Friday night will be held at special locations typical for our city.

The Netherlands is a rather small country and you may not have realized that a sightseeing trip to Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Utrecht will not take more than an hour by train.

**Caroline Vos, Congress President**

## TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR PMS O'BRIEN DSc, MD, FRCOG, MB BCH



The International Society of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ISPOG) pays tribute to Professor P M Shaughn O'Brien who recently retired from clinical and academic practice after decades of meritorious service.

After holding clinical and academic positions in

Nottingham, Oxford and London, he moved to Stoke-on-Trent where he was the Foundation Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Keele University Medical School from 1989 until retirement. He undertook research in a range of topics in gynaecology and is a world authority in the Premenstrual Syndrome. He established and chaired





the International Society for Premenstrual Disorders which published consensus papers. He crowned his work in this field with the release of PreMentricS, an app for identification and quantification of premenstrual symptoms. He produced over 300 publications, over 40 book chapters and 17 text books as author or senior editor. These include the book *Biopsychosocial Factors in Obstetrics and Gynaecology*.

Shaughn was an active member of ISPOG, Joint Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Chairman of the British Society of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The journal's impact factor rose substantially during his tenure. He also served as Vice-President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, responsible for professional and clinical standards.

We wish him many more years of fulfilment as he pursues his interests in art and sailing.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATIONAL MODULES

The Education Committee is still looking for authors willing to write modules that educate about specific aspects of psychosomatic obstetrics and gynecology. Interested parties may preview sample modules on the ISPOG website, or get more information about the intended format here: <http://www.ispog.org/images/education/template-casepresentation.pdf>

If you are interested in submitting a module for consideration, please contact Jonathan Schaffir at [jonathan.schaffir@osumc.edu](mailto:jonathan.schaffir@osumc.edu)

## ISPOG INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

**Individual membership of ISPOG is available to people who live in countries without national POG societies. To qualify for Individual membership of ISPOG an individual must**

- A. belong to an appropriate profession that has an Ethical Code consistent with the country's own professional code
- B. pay the appropriate membership fee to ISPOG

People who are interested in applying for individual membership are invited to contact Ms Bianca Scarlett at [admin@ispog.org.au](mailto:admin@ispog.org.au), who will send an application form. The completed application form should be returned to Bianca. The application will be assessed by members of the ISPOG board, once approved, an invoice with payment instructions will be issued.

**Please encourage your international colleagues without access to a national POG society to apply for individual membership through the ISPOG website [www.ispog.org.au](http://www.ispog.org.au)**

## CALL FOR LOCAL INFORMATION FOR ISPOG WEBSITE

Please send details of local activities (POG meetings, courses, collaborations, conferences, etc.) in your country.

To advertise your events on the ISPOG website please forward the information to the ISPOG Secretariat Bianca Scarlett at [admin@ispog.org.au](mailto:admin@ispog.org.au)

## COUNTRY REPORTS

### Australia



Australian Society for  
Psychosocial Obstetrics  
& Gynaecology

The Australian Society of Psychosocial Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ASPOG) has had a busy year. Our 44<sup>th</sup> annual conference 2018 was held in August at Western Sydney University, under the theme **'Women's health, life and rights'**. Thirty-one papers were presented, focusing on diverse psychosocial aspects of women's reproductive and sexual health and including clinical updates and cutting-edge research across a range of disciplines. We had over 70 delegates, including obstetricians, gynaecologists, general practitioners, sexual health providers, allied health professionals, medical students and registrars, and women's reproductive health researchers.

The conference was a great success, with five delegates being nominated to join the ASPOG board,







and a group of clinicians and researchers agreeing to hold the 2019 conference in Melbourne.

We were also pleased to launch the new ASPOG website in 2018, which will make accessing information about the organisation, submitting conference abstracts, and provision of links to ISPOG a much easier process <https://aspog.org.au/>

Finally, we updated our membership process, and welcomed a number of new members through the conference and other networking. We are keen to continue to expand ASPOG, in order to encourage and facilitate the interdisciplinary work that is our core purpose.

We have submitted 2 symposia to the ISPOG 2019 conference and hope to see a substantive Australian contingent at the conference in The Hague, facilitating international networking and collaboration.

Jane M Ussher, President ASPOG  
Professor of Women's Health Psychology, Western Sydney University

## Germany



**DGPFG e.V.**  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychosomatische  
Frauenheilkunde und Geburtshilfe e.V.

### National Congresses

The national OBGYN congress attracted more than 5000 Gynaecologists at **Berlin**, Germany in October 2018.

The German Society of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology had a lot of opportunities to influence the general OBGYN congress-program.

We were present with seminars and workshops regarding gynaecology, obstetrics, reproductive medicine and doctor-patient-relationship in general. As a result, we can state that psychosomatic OBGYN had a strong impact on the national OBGYN congress. Some of the seminars needed over-flow-rooms.

The yearly psychosomatic OBGYN congress was held at **Berlin** March 16-17, 2018.

The program was focussing on "Das Eigene und das Fremde" (the self and the foreign world). More than 280 physicians, midwives, social workers did attend the congress with a lot of lectures, workshops, free communications and posters.

The next yearly congress will take place at **Munich** March 13-16, 2019. The congress focusses on "Female identity between pleasure and suffering" (Weibliche Identität zwischen Lust und Leid). The Department of ObGyn at Munich University will host the congress in the centre of Munich town. Subjects are Psychooncology, Sexuality, Tradition and Trauma, Neuro-Biology and Psychosomatics. Opportunity for free lectures and posters is given. Please contact: [info@dgpfpg.de](mailto:info@dgpfpg.de)

All presenters of free communication and posters at the yearly congress 2017 at Dresden got a free copy of our Journal, The Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynecology (JPOG). For the year 2018 there are distributed 30 journals for one year as a courtesy of the German Society.

### Guidelines:

The German Society is involved in many **National Guidelines** regarding the psychosomatical/psychosocial aspects of:

- Abuse of children
- Caesarean section
- Contraception
- Chronic pelvic pain
- Plastic surgery of vagina
- Prevention and therapy of preterm delivery
- Hormonal treatment in peri- and post menopause
- Somatic complaints with inadequate organic explanation
- Breast cancer
- Fertility protection and oncological diseases
- Psychosomatic orientated diagnostic and therapy of sterility

**Prof. Dr. med. Heribert Kentenich (Berlin)**

**Dr. Vivian Pramataroff- Hamburger (Munich)**





## Hungary (HSPOG)

A. Our Society organized two sections within the framework of the national conferences:

1. Psychosomatic section on the 31st congress of the Hungarian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology Balatonfüred, 2018. 24-26. May
  - Edina Dombi - The role of psychologist in the obstetric and gynecologic primary care
  - Levente Rubliczky – Psychosomatic aspects of the stress urinary incontinence
  - Krisztina Gyetván – Support of the breast feeding in special problematic situations
2. Helping professions among families caring premature child in the Hungarian Society of Psychology Budapest, 2018. 31. May – 2. June
  - Péter Szeverényi – Premature birth – the role of maternal stress
  - Andrea Szolnoki – Psychiatric diseases during perinatal period
  - Zsuzsa Török – Negative psychological consequences of premature birth
  - Balázs Kovács-Pászthy – Born – but good? Maternal side of premature birth

B. We took part in every county in the compulsory postgraduate training course of district nurses, the HSPOG has 3 officially evaluated 1-day training program:

1. Current issues of the health psychology in the district nurse's work 2. Consultations in the every-day practice 3. That we need to know about preparation for delivery and labor for the next year we offer for accreditation two other topics, too:
2. Focus on burn-out syndrome
3. Perinatal death – theory and practice in the every-day work

We took part in the compulsory training course for O-G specialization exam Budapest, 2018. 6. November:

- Péter Szeverényi – Psychosomatic aspects of perinatal period
- Zsuzsa Török – National guideline of psychological tasks in the case of perinatal death for the next year we offer for official accreditation our 3-days training course for physicians and

psychologists on the field of psychosomatic O-G.

C. We participated on the XI. International Symposium Global Challenges in a Changing World – new roles and competences in the field of nursing. Nyíregyháza, 2018. 27. September  
Zsuzsa Török – Nursing tasks in the case of perinatal death

D. In a frame of scholarship, founded by the Italian Cultural Institute – we have taken the scientific relationship with the University of Brescia, Department of Perinatal Psychology and Neuroscience. Two specific areas for future joint work were discussed:

1. We would like to assess the changing in the professional handling of perinatal loss during the previous 25 years and the Hungarian results compared to the Italian practice.
2. We intend to evaluate post-traumatic stress disorder among parents after premature birth; the Italian colleagues performed similar research, so we want to rely on their previous experiences.

E. Recently we work a lot for two forthcoming events:

1. Peter Szeverényi's 70th birthday will be on 16th of January, 2019. We organized a scientific meeting for his celebration: "Creation of the family-centered obstetric in Debrecen" with three presentations
  - Prof. Ferenc Túry - Solemnly about psychosomatics
  - Attila Forgács – About the prenatal impressions – before-the-words field
  - János Kiss – Subjectively-objectively about the husband-participated delivery
2. In Spring, 2019 we will hold the next congress of HSPOG. The main topic is: Changings of the obstetric practice during the 25 years in Hungary.





## Israel (ISRAPOG)

Except the routine activity of the different committees we conducted:

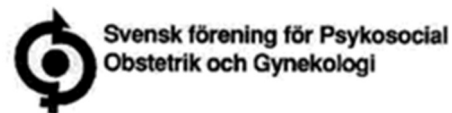
1. In February 2018 with great success and interest of the residents a session of ISRAPOG in the Academic Center for Post-Graduate Studies at the Sackler Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University on the topic of: **"Psychosomatic Aspects of Infertility Treatment and Menopause"** was conducted.
2. On the 8th of March, the **"International Women's Day"** we conducted the **Annual ISRAPOG Meeting** on the topic: **"The impact of Sexual Harassment in Women and Man on Fertility, Pregnancy and Delivery"**. This meeting was attended by 400 participants with a great variety of the medical fields and was an outstanding success. The meeting was covered by the Israeli media very extensively.
3. During the Annual ISRAPOG Meeting the General Assembly was conducted and following decisions were undertaken:
  - a. Prof. Dalia Merari expressed her wish to withdraw from the presidency of ISRAPOG after a tenure of 20 years. She agreed to continue her activities as Honorary Founding President.
  - b. I was elected as President of ISRAPOG.
  - c. Dr. Judith Reidman-Helfer was appointed Chairman of ISRAPOG.
4. We are in a process of establishment of a **Young Generation Special Interest Group** that will comprise of medical students and residents who are interested in research in our field.
5. In January 2019 we are beginning a Post Graduate Course in the Psychiatry Department at the Medical School of Tel Aviv University: **Women's Mental Health in the Life Cycle**. The course is composed of seven sessions concerning psychosomatic aspects of women's health.

## Netherlands (NVOG)



Three new multidisciplinary guidelines have been developed, chaired by board members of the Dutch POG: Vulvodynia, Care for Women after Female Genital Mutilation and Childbirth-related PTSD.

## Sweden (SFPOG)



News from Sweden is that membership is steady but lower than what we want. Our annual symposium will be on April 5, 2019, hosted by Malmö University. The free translation from Swedish to English is "Reproduction in transition" new patients, new techniques – new demands!?"

We will have four speakers all prominent clinicians and/or researchers within their field.

## Uruguay

As concerns the development of Psychosocial Obstetrics and Gynecology, our country is undergoing a contradictory process.

On the one hand, training of professionals, students and community-based workers in the psychosocial field has continued developing steadily, now starting the 28th annual edition of full-range training in Perinatal Psychology (one year, 120 hrs Diploma).

In the same trend, the new curriculum for undergraduate training in Medicine (which is embedded in psychosocial components and sensitization) has been standing firmly, with the first group of 400 new doctors having achieved their degree in July 2017.

Equally, health care services do no fail to include psychosocial interventions in Ob/Gyn in severe conditions and potentially pathogenic situations such as breast cancer, stillbirth, premature birth, congenital defects and the like.





As concerns dissemination, a fundamental step has been taken by introducing as basic literature for Medicine students the written text of the lecture delivered in the Malaga ISPOG meeting with a founded questioning of the widespread dissemination of the deleterious effects of stress on pregnancy. The same ideas have been used to write a chapter in Edozien & Brien (eds) book on Psychosocial Factors in Obstetrics and Gynecology, prepared to be published by Cambridge University Press.

In the field of publications, a chapter on perinatal loss produced in Uruguay has been included in Paarlberg and van de Wiel (eds) book, which is mainly addressed to Ob-Gyn students and residents.

On the other hand, there have been important regressions in two capital fields: formal training of Ob-Gyn postgraduate students and residents, and clinical work with patients in the healthcare services.

As concerns training in the Medical field, this has been disregarded by the younger generation of doctors and psychologists holding posts in the University. They have favoured clinical work and there has been an important regression in teaching in our field, which has become increasingly psychiatric and detached from everyday care and an empathic approach to patients in the perinatal field. Among seasoned professors and clinicians, our field remains high in esteem and respect.

In the clinical field, two important problems have arisen.

As concerns health care services, since specific training has been disregarded when appointing psychologists for clinical work, some interventions disregard important developments in theory and practice developed in the country along the last 30 years. An interdisciplinary team is working at the Ministry of Health to detect and correct this.

On the other hand, there has been an extraordinary uprising of alternative, New Age uptake of the field, introducing doula work and non-professional group/couple/individual support during pregnancy and the puerperium, which effectively brings

subjective help but is not evidence-founded and is strongly ideologically-founded. This brings along new problems such as depression over caesarean section (based in guilty feelings of depriving the child of a natural birth), extraordinary delays (in years) in weaning the child from mother's milk (with many children suffering hypercalcemia and some severe cases of malnutrition) and a tendency to "empower" women to defend ferociously their rights at the moment of delivery.

Negative news from the clinical field in perinatology, is that public hospitals have become increasingly hostile to poor, socially secluded women, who are often separated from their infants during hospital stays. These infants are cared for by "Kangaroo" people, i.e. regular citizens who offer 4-hour duties, 24 hrs, year-round of what is called "affect nutrition". These interventions (which are ferociously popular, with hundreds in the row to become kangaroos) are not evidence-based and, in fact, go against existing evidence of the ill-effect of multiple bondings in the first months of life, as well as the increase in mother depression when she is considered an inadequate mother and her child is withheld from her.

A summary of the situation could be: increasing lay people sensitivity and actions progressively replace the "human side" of Medicine, which tends to be more technological, market-oriented and competitive.







## United Kingdom



2018 has been the most successful year for the society. The Society has been restructured and the constitution has been updated to accommodate these changes. The membership fees were amended to motivate [junior doctors, members of the public, retired professional and Allied-Medical Professionals](#) joining the Society. The RCOG Press Office interviewed the chairman to gain more information about the Society mission, the Past and the Future. It was published in the RCOG Magazine. During The Retirement Party at the RCOG for Professor Shaughn O'Brien, he expressed his support to the Society and its mission and those who lead it. These combined with very successful BSBOG Annual Scientific Meeting in London and the joint BSBOG/IPM meeting at the Royal College in London and Manchester, during the Annual Professional development conferences, raised the Society profile leading to noticeable increase in membership.

### We have had many successful events in 2018:

- We participated in the Annual Professional development at the RCOG in November 18. We ran joint BSBOG/IPM session on **Sex and Bio psychosocial factors in children and adolescence**.
- We had very successful ASM in Newham Hospital, London organised by Dr Ferha Saeed. The

theme of the meeting was "THE EFFECT OF BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS ON PREGNANCY AND NEONATAL OUTCOMES".

- The Chairman regularly attended The RCOG Societies Liaison Group Meeting and Involved in the RCOG World Congress Organising Group.
- Ferha Saeed has participated in the IPM ASM and given a talk about sex during antenatal and postnatal period.
- Martin John Campbell updated the constitution with the help from the Chairman.

## ISPOG MEMBER EVENTS

**48th Annual Conference of the DGPFG 2019**  
**13th-16th March 2019**

"Female identity between pleasure and suffering"  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Campus Innenstadt, Maistraße 11, 80337  
Munich, Germany  
<https://www.dgpfg-kongress.de/>

### ASPOG

1-3 August 2019  
The Royal Women's Hospital Melbourne  
Melbourne, VIC  
Australia  
<https://aspog.org.au/past-conferences/>

### NASPOG Biennial Meeting

**17-19 April 2020**  
**St. Louis, MO**  
**USA**  
[www.naspog.org](http://www.naspog.org)

