



BABY TALK

The Official Newsletter of the Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health

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Notes From The President *by John D. Kinsel*

The Windmills of My Mind

One of the perks of being president of the Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health, besides getting to write this column and being the one to make sure the trash gets taken out, is the opportunity to represent OAIMH as an affiliate of the World Association of Infant Mental Health.

This past July, that meant being forced to travel to Amsterdam, The Netherlands, for the WAIMH World Congress. It was a tough assignment, but somebody had to do it.

Amsterdam is a lovely city, its canal side streets peppered with wonderful museums for both the art lover and the history buff. I didn't get to see much of the city, however. The reality was that the quality, variety and sheer number of conference sessions made it hard to tear myself away to sightsee.

This was my second World Congress, the last one being a bit closer to home (Montreal), and my experience there was similar. I would encourage anyone serious about the field of Infant Mental Health to attend a Congress (2004 will be in Melbourne down under!), as it is an unequalled opportunity to learn about state of the art clinical, educational and research IMH activities, as well as a chance to meet and network with colleagues from across the globe.

While I could fill the pages of **BABY TALK** with ideas and anecdotes gleaned from my time in Amsterdam, I'll restrain myself and share just to that I believe to have direct

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Charles Zeanah to Headline 3rd Annual OAIMH Conference

The Annual Conference Committee of the OAIMH Board is pleased to announce that Charles Zeanah, MD, of Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, has agreed to provide keynote and workshop leadership for this year's annual meeting.

Perhaps best know as editor of The Handbook of Infant Mental Health, Dr. Zeanah has been an international leader in the study of Infant/Parent Attachment in families from impoverished and violent environments. This expertise is reflected in the theme for the conference: "Babies on the Edge: Intervention Strategies with Young Families Affected by Violence, Separation and Stress." As this theme suggests, the focus of the conference will be on ways to practically integrate our theoretical understandings into direct interventions with infants and families. Conveyed through keynote address, videotaped illustration, and processing of locally developed clinical vignettes, the content will be of special interest to practitioners.

The daylong conference will be held on November 8, 2002 at the Deer Creek State Park and Resort just southwest of Columbus. As usual, CEU's will be available and OAIMH members will receive a registration discount. If for some reason you have not received registration materials, please contact Jan Kushmaul immediately at I-888-850-4521. Registration is limited by space available.

(Windmills, cont'd)

bearing on the life and future of OAIMH.

In one of those strange little twists that happen in life, both of these issues involve other programs in the USA. Sometimes you have to go halfway around the world to learn what's in your own backyard.

The first involves the Infant Mental Health movement in Florida. I had several opportunities to both listen to formal presentations and engage in private discussions with three key players in that state: Sandy Adams and Mimi Graham of FSU and Joy Osofsky, of LSU, who serves as outside consultant. These women, along with a set of stakeholders not unlike the core group we have in Ohio, have organized a comprehensive and diversified plan of action that is well on its way to being fully implemented. What is interesting is that they have not relied on government to take leadership. Rather they have mobilized private funding in cooperation with higher education as a primary mode of operation, while taking what they could then leverage from the various levels of government. Here in Ohio we are fortunate to have an active advocacy for the mental health needs of young children at the State level and some excellent examples of county governments stepping up to the plate. It seems to me we may be able to become even more effective by learning from Florida's success in the "private sector" and adding it to the good things we all ready have going.

The second piece of networking that emerged from the World Congress grew out of conversations with Sheryl Goldberg (President) and Deborah Weatherston (IMH god) from the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health. Our friends up north are actively working on the issue of training

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IMH practitioners and the development of a credential for IMH providers. Our association has the opportunity to partner with MIAIMH, and perhaps folks from the Indiana and Illinois associations, to get in on the ground floor of this effort. As such, we have the potential to have a voice in the process as well as an avenue for helping interested clinicians develop a specialty to help address the current shortage of providers with infant expertise.

If any of these connections pan out, my trip to Amsterdam will have been worth it. Thanks for giving me the chance to represent you to the World. I don't think it was just jousting at windmills!

JDK

P.S. Changing of the Guard This is very likely the last time I will write this column. When the Ohio Association was first organized, a group of nine individuals agreed to be the first board. Three of those agreed to serve a one-year term (those positions filled in last year's election,) three agreed to two-year terms (those being replaced in this year's election--see article on page 3 of this issue,) and three agreed to serve a three-year term. In this manner, an experienced board made up six members who had each served at least one year would be maintained.

At this point, Roz Williams, Lisa Smith and Beth Finley-Belgrad have served the 2-year terms they signed on for. Beth has been nominated for election to a new 3-year term. To Lisa and Roz we say a sincere thank you for putting so much of yourselves into helping OAIMH to move from infancy to our new found growing autonomy-i.e. toddlerhood! You will be missed on the board!

There are two new nominees, one each for the positions Roz and Lisa are vacating. Barbara Feldmar is from Oberlin and has

(Changing of the Guard, cont'd.)

and Children's Mental Health for over 30 years. She has trained with Selma Freiberg and was one of the 20 who attended the training of IMH trainers sponsored by ODH in 1998.

Delmar D. Dunlap is Project Director for Help Me Grow of Muskingum County in Zanesville. His program services a diverse population of infants and families, including rural Appalachian folks. His representation of his geographic area fills a gap in the OAIMH leadership circle.

Members will have the opportunity to vote these persons into office at the November 8 Annual Meeting.

In a similar fashion, the position of board chair was determined to be a two-year commitment followed by two ex-officio years as past president. In this way, the past president can serve as consultant/mentor to the new president, who for the next 2 years will be Mike Thomasgard.

I have served my two years as President and it has been delightful. I have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know many of you and your programs, to be a voice for the very young here in Ohio and to watch the Association grow in numbers and in influence. Thank you so much!

Psychiatry for the Youngest

By Dr. Beth

*(Ed. Note: In the last issue of **Baby Talk**, Dr. Beth began this article on Autistic Spectrum Disorders. She identified three levels of intervention with children who meet criteria for such a diagnosis. Level III interventions include medications, structured behavioral programs such as ABA, family therapy and other supportive services. Level II interventions include sensory integration treatment, listening programs, auditory integration training, other structured auditory programs, OT, PT, specialized teaching approaches, Floor Time and optometric interventions.)*

Level I interventions have to do with removing toxins, ameliorating biochemical imbalances and infections, correcting nutritional deficits, and providing necessary nutritional and other supplements. Some of the most striking recent advancements in our understanding of Autistic Spectrum Disorders have come at Level I.

The greatest heterogeneity (differences between individuals) in our population is immunologic. The two defense mechanisms our body has are immunologic (fights foreign intrusion) and gastrointestinal (we ingest substances and retrieve the nutrients while getting rid of the what we don't want or need. When these two defense mechanisms are not working perfectly, then toxins are not screened out as they should, resulting in adverse neurological effects that manifest themselves as processing irregularities. When children display an array of such processing problems, their symptomology leads them to be classified in such categories as Autism or ADHD.

We know there has been a 1000-fold increase in some forms of Autism since the 1980's. *(Cont'd top of column 2)*

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There is a similar pattern for the incidence of ADHD. Co-occurrent to these increases was the increase in vaccinations, which shifted our population's immune function from T-1 from T2, resulting in less general capacity to fight viruses. In addition, the preservative thimerisol used in vaccines is 50% mercury, and therefore toxic. Some autistic children have defective or absent sulfation, the mechanism that normally detoxifies mercury, suggesting a link between vaccines and autism.

Another change during this era has been the increase in processing of food that diminishes nutritional value. The removal of Omega-3 fatty acids from cooking oil in the '70's (to improve shelf life), for instance, has implications yet to be fully understood. Omega-3 fatty acids increase membrane flexibility. Since most bodily processes, including thinking, involve chemicals crossing membranes, the elimination of such fatty acids may contribute to decreased efficiency in these processes.

We know that there is an immunologically vulnerable group of children who, when exposed to these and other environmental factors, develop autism. Which children under what range of conditions will be affected in this way is a matter for continued research. DAN (Defeat Autism Now) has developed a protocol to look into these bio-chemical irregularities.

If you are interested in more information on Level III concerns, visit the ARI (Autism Research Institute) website or contact Dr. Beth at eafb17@hotmail.com

(Dr. Beth is Elizabeth Finley-Belgrad, is an Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist in practice in the Youngstown area and a member of the OAIMH Board.)