



# ISPOG

International Society of Psychosomatic  
Obstetrics and Gynaecology

October 2016

# Newsletter

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



## Presidents Report

Dear ISPOG members,  
In May of this year at the occasion of our triennial international congress I have taken over the presidency of our society. Thanks to all of you for your confidence and your support!

First of all, I want to thank Carlos Damonte Khouri, my predecessor

and our immediate past-president for his tireless engagement for and his dedication to ISPOG, not only during his presidency, but also in the years before as secretary general and as president elect. He is an extremely skilled networker and has built a perfect basis for me as his successor. Together with the national Spanish POG society, he also organised our ISPOG congress in Málaga. Find below a report authored by Clare Willocks about her personal impression of this event. I am very grateful to Carlos for all he did for us, not only as a precious and loyal colleague, but also as a good friend to me.

Aside from building up on Carlos' achievements, my focus during the term of my presidency will be on expanding our initiatives in education.

There were some changes in the ISPOG board: while the Past President Marieke Paarlberg joined the Board of Fellows, the Treasurer post was handed over from Beate Wimmer-Puchinger to Vivian Pramataroff-Hamburger from Germany and Leroy Edozien from the UK joined us as the new President Elect. I am happy that I still have Heather Rowe on board and at my side, who was re-elected to the responsible position of our Secretary General for another term. I am also glad that we officially have the support of three elected Members-at-Large now: Dov Feldberg from Israel for international relations, Jonathan Schaffir from the USA for education and Jacqueline Pieters from the Netherlands for communications.

A major aim of ISPOG is to facilitate communication between us health professionals and our patients, but also among ourselves. This is a precondition to share knowledge and to make available education and training in psychosomatic skills to all our members and all health professionals who are engaged in women's health. The internet and the ISPOG website are the building blocks to make available educational offerings worldwide to everyone interested.

During the past months my efforts were in giving our website a new look and updating the information. This action is still in progress, but I invite you to have a first look at it!

Our intention is that the homepage becomes a lively platform for exchange among us and with all health professionals interested in psychosomatic and psychosocial obstetrics and gynecology. We intend to post regular news updates, which might be interesting for our members, to inform about current and future congresses, which are relevant for us, as well as education modules.

We also invite you to contribute actively! Under the term "education" on our homepage you will find our educational aims and an outline of our idea of an E-learning academy. There is more detailed information on the current activities of the educational committee in the section on education in this Newsletter.

Aside from or in addition to the internet there are other important media to share clinical experience and scientific knowledge.

For ISPOG this is first of all our journal the JPOG. We are very grateful to Pauline Slade and Shaughn O'Brian, who resigned end September of this year, for their engagement as Editors-in-Chief. A detailed acknowledgment of their work is in Carlos Damonte's separate report below. At present, applications for the post of new Editors are under evaluation and we hope that we will soon be able to announce a new pair of Editors-in-Chief.

There is not only our journal, however: I am very pleased to inform you about the launch of a very practical textbook on bio-psycho-social Obstetrics and Gynaecology edited by Marieke Paarlberg and Harry van de Wiel (see more detailed information below).

To conclude, we can look back on remarkable achievements and look ahead to a promising end of the current and start of the next year. We will be back to you with the next Newsletter at the latest in the first months of 2017. This next newsletter will be dedicated mainly to the reports of the national societies, more news about education and an outlook on what's up in 2017, including our ExCo-meeting during the World Congress of Women's Mental Health in Dublin from March 6-9.

Last but not least and in order to keep in touch without obstacles, please be aware that we have a new

Email address: [admin@ispog.org](mailto:admin@ispog.org)

Sibil Tschudin  
President of ISPOG



## Special Acknowledgment and Gratitude

As President of ISPOG in the last 3 years' period and of the Málaga International ISPOG Conference 2016 and in the name of the Board and all members I want to thank very

specially to four VIPs in our organization, Marieke, Beate, Pauline and Shaugn.

Dr Karen Marieke Paarlberg, The Netherlands, Gynecologist and Perinatologist, has been the most active and helpful Immediate Past President ISPOG has ever had. At the same time, she was immersed in the great task of producing a practical Book on Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology, she has collaborated with the Board, participated actively in the meetings and was a brilliant speaker in many Congresses all over the world. All of this was done in her style: positive, practical, avoiding conflicts and facilitating the officers' work.

Dear Marieke, thank you for being such a good companion, long life to your Book and all the success you deserve, welcome to the ISPOG Board of Fellows as the youngest member!

Prof Beate Wimmer-Puchinger, Austria, Clinical Psychologist, Gender and Public Health Expert, has contributed immensely to ISPOG financial stability. In her first term as Treasurer she worked hard to formalize the legal address of the Society. She agreed to take on the task again after the resignation of Barbara Maier. This was a relief for myself, the Board and the Society in a difficult moment. Dear Beate please feel our gratitude, and extend it to your efficient secretary Gerda Matejik. It is always good to have your knowledge and will to help.

Prof Pauline Slade, UK, Professor and Consultant of Clinical Psychology has been very committed with the best possible relationship between ISPOG and the JPOG, our official Journal. She also presented her work in our Congresses and Symposia everywhere. Within her term as Secretary General she negotiated successfully a withdrawal from the previous status, which had been clearly disadvantageous for our organization. In the last three years as Editor-in-Chief the Journal achieved a 50% increase in the Impact Factor and a big increase in subscriptions, including the "online" one with a very reasonable price for ISPOG members. She instituted several important strategy initiatives, like the appointment of Associate Editor to manage workload and broaden the

professional basis of the editorial team; clear contractual arrangements with publisher support of managing editor, which was previously ISPOG's responsibility, statistical review of all papers prior to publication, etc. Thank you very much Pauline for all of these achievements.

Prof Shaugn O'Brien, UK, Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology, has been an excellent joint Editor-in-Chief and helped with his work and ideas the achievements led by Pauline, at the same time he actively contributed to the successful management of the British POG Society and its recognition by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Thankyou Shaugn for your collaboration and your participation in our Málaga Congress.

Carlos Damonte Khoury  
Ob Gyn. Spain  
ISPOG Past President

## Announcement of The New JPOG Editors

Taylor and Francis, the publishers of JPOG have undertaken a rigorous search and recruitment process, and interviewed a short list of candidates for the joint Editors-in-Chief of the journal. The final decision is imminent and a special announcement will be made as soon as the successful candidates are known.

## Education

By Jonathan Schaffir

The ISPOG Educational Committee had a meeting at the occasion of the ISPOG congress in Málaga. It has been discussing how to provide instruction on psychosomatic elements of women's health to our members. They propose to issue brief modules on a variety of topics that will be focused, case-based, and practical. These modules would be peer-reviewed by specialty editors, and accessible on the society's website under a separate heading of educational modules. ISPOG members with expertise in particular areas will be invited to submit modules for review. A description of the module format and a first sample version can be found on our ISPOG website. Other examples of formats for less clinical areas may follow.

**Here is an example of what a module may look like:**

Please follow the link here:

<http://www.ispog.org/education/educational-modules>



## ISPOG 18th International Congress - Building Bridges to Better Care - a Personal Reflection

By Clare Willocks

I had no doubt about whether I would sign up or not for the 18th ISPOG Congress in Málaga, having thoroughly enjoyed the 16th and 17th ISPOG Congresses in Venice and Berlin respectively. I did not want to miss out on this one in "sunny" Spain. My expectations (other than for brilliant and un-remitting sunshine) were all fulfilled. Perhaps the rain was just as well, as the hotel I chose and the auditorium were opposite the beach, and I might have missed some of the educational aspects in pursuit of sun, but I was pleased to catch a few great rainbow pictures! Malaga as a city has so much more to offer than just sunshine, and you could spend days there learning about the history of the city and visiting all the art museums. The conference venue was the beautiful Centro Civico, apparently a paediatric sanatorium in a past life.

I have been a member BSPOGA since 2010 (Secretary from 2010-2015), and aware of the strong need to foster links with international societies and meet other colleagues who share similar aims – to improve awareness, recognition and healthcare for women during their reproductive lives.

I was privileged to join the pre and post ISPOG ExCo meetings and the General Assembly which helped me learn more about the society, collaboration with other organisations including FIGO, EBCOG and NASPOG, and to welcome new members from exciting places such as Brazil, Turkey, Slovenia, Russia and Dubai, not to mention ISPOG's ambassadorial activities in recruiting new member "states"!

ISPOG has always attracted me, understanding a different model of care in Europe, with strong input from psychiatry and psychology, which are often integrated into Obstetrics and Gynaecology practices - many clinicians being dual trained. I would dearly like to see us building more bridges towards greater integration between psyche and soma and invite more body workers (not just physiotherapists) who have a good understanding of the physical, emotional and psychological aspects of women's reproductive health.

So what did I choose to attend?

In the pre-congress Train the Trainer - dealing with the difficult patient workshop, it was great to meet like-minded multi-professional colleagues from Australia, Austria, Norway, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, NL, Switzerland, and I thoroughly enjoyed the interaction between us. We look forward to receiving the presentations by email to help us prepare our own

workshops. Participants all received a pocket card with handy acronyms - which you will learn if you attend the Joint BSPOG/RCOG workshop on 31 March 2017!

I then heard Croatia present on fetal programming and epigenetics and, being patriotic, attended the British (BSPOGA) symposium - interventions to promote perinatal wellbeing. The lecture on Personal Academies with Harry van der Weil was for me the most motivational. His vision is for a massive open online course / ISPOG wiki, incorporating elements of know how (competency), content and clinical reasoning. "If you can dream it, build it!". The forthcoming Springer textbook on BioPsychosocial Obstetrics and Gynaecology – a Competency Based Approach is a good example of what can be achieved.

A keynote lecture then followed entitled "Psychological and biological response to traumatic stress in women". My main memory of this was the picture of the presenter - Miranda Olf (NL) parachuting - with the caption "I happen to like stress", highlighting that the physiology of stress can build resilience! Then the Australia POG society symposium on pelvic pain-beyond infection, the symposium on expectations and birth, and our colleagues from Austria on influences on CS decision making. I would then have liked to go to cancer survivorship (NL) but was drawn to other go to the other NL symposium on trauma, helping us understand how we can prevent traumatic delivery experiences. It is "not necessarily the intervention but the way it was handled". This was then followed by the innovative and much needed Mind to Care web-based intervention developed by ISPOG Past President Marieke Paarlberg and colleagues on screening for vulnerabilities in the Netherlands.

The Friday started at 0830 with the Netherlands again, this time on vaginal penetration disorders and the pelvic floor, covering sexual pain disorders and the efficacy of therapist aided exposure for reduction in fear and avoidance of coitus, something I was required to attend after stating my wish for more integration with our somatic therapists! Needless to say it was excellent and thought provoking.

Presentations recognised the importance of fathers and the need to engage partners in childbirth, and post-traumatic stress among fathers following childbirth. Unfortunately, I was so engaged in these topics that I then missed most of Denise Defey (Uruguay) - always a passionate and engaging speaker.

I went to my second workshop of the Congress - Tools for wellbeing and prevention of burnout and stress in birth



attendants. This was absolutely excellent with thoughtful reflection and discussion, the archetypal divisions between obstetrician and midwife, and the importance of the culture of the workplace in an organisation that responds to stress. It is important that we focus on positive aspects of the care we provide – saving women's lives.

Topics throughout the day included PMS, termination of pregnancy, the Spanish symposia, psycho-oncology, and a joint Sweden / USA symposium on the identification and therapeutic management of traumatic relations among vulnerable patients – the Tiger in the Room! And yes, I managed to catch some of the oral communications, and see the last of the posters on the Saturday before the EBCOG – ISPOG joint symposium too!

With such a great program, I have not yet mentioned the social events – which included a great pre-congress dinner in the Restaurant José Carlos García – most definitely the first time I have seen a garden growing on the walls! I enjoyed the Flamenco dancing in the opening ceremony, and the congress dinner outing to the beach (thankfully in an inside restaurant as the weather was rather forbidding!) was a wonderful, warm and friendly event.

All in all, it was a fantastic Congress. The accommodation and transport links were excellent, although sadly there was little time to spend wandering around Malaga as I had to get back to work, taking time out of course for the RCOG congress in June where BSPOGA hosted a symposium.

ISPOG Seoul 2019, here we come!

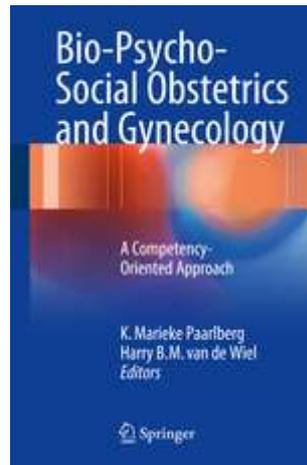
## Psychosomatic Medicine in Germany: More Timely Than Ever

This is an interesting article contributed by Professor Heribert Kantenich, Germany. It is an outline of the history and practice of psychosomatic medicine in Germany. An interesting read, and food for thought for those interested in the meanings of the term 'psychosomatic'

Stephan Zipfe, Wolfgang Herzog, Johannes Kruse, Peter Henningsen. Psychosomatic medicine in Germany: More Timely than ever. *Psychother Psychosom* 2016;85:262–269 DOI: 10.1159/000447701

**Marieke Paarlberg, Past ISPOG President and Harry van de Wiel, Past Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology are proud to announce that the book written with many other contributing ISPOG members will be launched later this year:**

Bio-psycho-social Obstetrics and Gynaecology  
A Competency-oriented Approach  
Editors: Paarlberg, K Marieke, van de Wiel, Harry B.M. (Eds.)



Explains bio-psycho-social care provision through a problem-oriented and case-based approach. Emphasizes the role of effective communication and multidisciplinary collaboration. Provides numerous tips of practical value to the busy clinician. This book will assist the reader by providing individually tailored, high-quality bio-psycho-social care to patients with a wide range of problems within the fields of

obstetrics, gynaecology, fertility, oncology, and sexology. Each chapter addresses a particular theme, issue, or situation in a problem-oriented and case-based manner that emphasizes the differences between routine and bio-psycho-social care. Relevant facts and figures are presented, advice is provided regarding the medical, psychological, and caring process, and contextual aspects are discussed. The book offers practical tips and actions within the bio-psycho-social approach, and highlights important do's and don'ts. To avoid a strict somatic thinking pattern, the importance of communication, multidisciplinary collaboration, and creation of a working alliance with the patient is emphasized. The book follows a consistent format, designed to meet the needs of challenged clinicians. ISBN 978-3-319-40404-2

For more information see:

<http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319404028>  
[www.ispog.org](http://www.ispog.org)

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