



**Minutes of EPSIG Executive Committee Meeting on 12 January 2021 7pm
held through Skype**

Present

Riadh Abed (RA) Finance Officer

Agnes Ayton (AA)

Adam Hunt (AH)

David Geaney (DG)

Muzaffar Kaser (MK)

Paul St John-Smith (PSS) Chair

Annie Swanepoel (AS) Newsletter Editor

Derek Tracey (DT)

Apologies:

Nikhil Chaudhary

1. Half-day webinar on 19 March 2021 'The Darwinian Roots of Attachment Theory' (ideas for publicity)

This is a Zoom-based webinar taking place on 19 March, 2021, 13:00-16:00 GMT. We discussed ways of publicising this event which will be administered by AH through his link to the Institute of Evolutionary Medicine in Zurich. The

event will be free of charge and with an initial capacity of 500 delegates which could be increased if necessary. We agreed the following:

- To send the program together with registration link to EPSIG members through Catherine at the college in the last week of January with reminders in the last week of February and a week before the event.
- To send the program (including registration link) through as many NHS trust's CPD systems as well as any other professional networks we have access to.
- AS will include the program in our next newsletter due to be released in February.
- To use social media e.g. Twitter to publicise the event.
- To ask Prof Ikkos of HoPSIG to send this to his SIG members if possible as part of a mutual collaborative agreement between EPSIG and HoPSIG (see below).



The Darwinian Roots of Attachment Theory

The Evolutionary Psychiatry Special Interest Group (EPSIG) of the Royal College of Psychiatrists invites interested professionals to a free webinar from four highly regarded thinkers in the field.

 **March 19th 2021 – 13:30-16:30 GMT** [Free to attend](#)

 [Full itinerary on EPSIG website. Free tickets available here](#)



Annie Swanepoel
Understanding child development from an evolutionary perspective.



Marinus van IJzendoorn
Institutional care is structural neglect and deviates from any 'environment of evolutionary adaptedness'.



Martin Brüne
Adult attachment and life history patterns in people with borderline personality disorder.



Jeremy Holmes
Bowlby, Darwin and group selection — a free energy neuroscience perspective.

Hosted by the Evolutionary Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists



The Darwinian Roots of Attachment Theory

March 19th 2021 – 13:30-16:30 GMT
Free to attend (limited spaces)

Speaker Biographies

Dr Annie Swanepoel is a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and also holds a PhD in Human Physiology. She became interested in Evolutionary Science when she learnt about Attachment Theory. She is currently the Editor of the EPSIG Newsletter and a member of the Tavistock Evopsychotherapy group, on whose paper this talk is based.



Professor Marinus van IJzendoorn is Professor of Human Development at the Department of Psychology, Education and Child Studies, Erasmus University, Rotterdam; Scientific Consultant of the Leiden-Consortium of Individual Development, and PI of the Generation R cohort study, Erasmus University Medical Centre. Formerly, Honorary Senior Visiting Fellow, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, School of Clinical Medicine, University of Cambridge, UK (2017-2020).



Professor Martin Brüne is Head of the Division of Cognitive Neuropsychiatry and Psychiatric Preventive Medicine at the LWL University-Hospital, Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany. He has authored more than 300 articles and book chapters. He has also authored the Textbook of Evolutionary Psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine: The Origins of Psychopathology (2nd edn. OUP, 2016) and co-edited the "Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Medicine (together with Wulf Schiefenhövel; OUP, 2019).



Dr Jeremy Holmes is a former Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist of UCL, then in Devon, UK. He chaired the Psychotherapy Faculty of the RCPsych 1998-2002 and is currently visiting Professor at the University of Exeter. He is author and editor of several books including *John Bowlby and Attachment Theory* (2013), *Attachment in Therapeutic Practice* (with Arietta Slade, 2017) and *The Brain has a Mind of its Own* (2020). He was recipient of a New York Attachment Consortium Bowlby-Ainsworth Founders Award.



[Click here to register for free](#)

Webinar Program

Session 1 (Chaired by Riadh Abed)

- 13:30-14:00 Understanding child development from an evolutionary perspective.
Annie Swanepoel (UK)
- 14:00-14:10 Q&A
- 14:10-14:40 Institutional care is structural neglect and deviates from any 'environment of evolutionary adaptedness'.
Marinus van IJzendoorn (Netherlands)
- 14:40-14:50 Q&A
- 14:50-15:00 Break

Session 2 (Chaired by Paul St-John Smith)

- 15:00-15:30 Adult attachment and life history patterns in people with borderline personality disorder.
Martin Brüne (Germany)
- 15:30-15:40 Q&A
- 15:40-16:10 Bowlby, Darwin and group selection — a free energy neuroscience perspective.
Jeremy Holmes (UK)
- 16:10-16:20 Q&A
- 16:20-16:30 General Discussion and Close

2. Establishment of sister EPSIG at the Irish College of Psychiatrists (inaugural meeting to be held on Darwin Day, February, 2021). Ideas for collaboration.

Members present warmly welcomed the establishment of a sister EPSIG at the Irish College of Psychiatrists through an initiative driven by Prof Henry O'Connell. We look forward to exploring ways of collaborating with our Irish colleagues. Once they have had their inaugural meeting in February our two groups may hold a meeting of a core group from each (2-3 members) to explore opportunities for collaboration and mutual support.

3. EPSIG, AGM, 11 June 2021. One guest speaker, Gillian Pepper (Newcastle) on Adversity and Health.

Attendance at our virtual AGM will be free of charge but the guest-speaker lecture will be chargeable according to new college rules. We will follow the specified charge rates set by the college for this event. The event will publicised this nearer the time. The meeting will be hosted by the college and most likely be through Microsoft Teams.

4. 4th International EPSIG Symposium, October 2021 (Update) F2F or virtual or hybrid?

The format of this symposium will be dependent of government and college policies. It will be held as a virtual webinar if F2F is not permitted. The symposium will be run by CALC in either format and attendance will be chargeable although the rates will depend on the format. All speakers and chairs have already confirmed their availability for the date (29 October 2021).

5. Ideas for EPSIG newsletter

AS informed the meeting that the forthcoming newsletter will contain an interview with Gerhard Medicus on social Darwinism.

AS welcomed any suggestions for people to interview or other ideas for future newsletters.

6. Ideas for increasing membership numbers

(End of November 2021: = 1609)

Ideas to publicise the activities, aims and objectives of EPSIG were discussed. This included giving talks on evolution to various audiences.

DT highlighted the possibility of proposing evolutionary talks as outreach to divisions of the RCPsych. There is also some talk of the Sports and Philosophy SIGs wanting to engage with us.

AS suggested we should submit proposals for participation at the college's international congress whether through posters or other means.

AA and MK also suggested we could work with medical schools to introduce evolution into their syllabus/teaching programs through the Psych Societies, which often look for speakers. MK mentioned that Paul Wilkinson is the new clinical dean at Cambridge University and that he will contact him. We need to tailor our contributions to the trainee curriculum, as evolutionary psychiatry has not been included as such yet.

In addition, the Poster that was designed in 2019 with the help of Bethany St John-Smith is available to us to use in the forthcoming college annual meeting to publicise EPSIG if possible.

7. Progress of Edited Volume: 'Evolutionary Psychiatry: Evolutionary Perspectives on Mental Health'

This project is progressing and we hope to achieve our target deadlines. It would represent a significant achievement for EPSIG to publish such a volume in 2022.

8. Plans for Student/Trainee Charles Darwin Essay and Prize

AS, DT, MK, AA and Ben Janaway (who is the trainee member of the exec committee was not present at the meeting but he expressed an interest to take part in this initiative). AS volunteered to coordinate this group and report back to the AGM.

8. Mutual support agreement between EPSIG and History of Psychiatry SIG (HoPSIG)

PSS to email Prof George Ikkos chair of HoPSIG to advertise attachment webinar.

10. EPSIG.org domain

RA informed the group that he had purchased the above domain for 5 years for just under £50. This provides the opportunity for EPSIG to host its own website in the future. At present the domain is simply linked to EPSIG web pages on the college website and provides a simple way to convey this to any interested colleague world-wide. The expense was approved as an official EPSIG expense.

DT suggested the idea of an official EPSIG twitter account but no decisions were made regarding this.

11. AOB

12 Next Exec meeting April 20th at 7pm Skype

Appendix

Essay Prize

The Charles Darwin Medical Student and Psychiatric trainee Essay Prize(s) in Evolutionary Psychiatry
Draft 1 11/5/2019

The Special interest group in Evolutionary Psychiatry is offering a £500 prize for an essay of 5000 words on a topic involving evolutionarily informed psychiatry. The winner will also receive a pass to attend the conference normally held each year which will include registration for the full conference, attendance at the conference dinner and up travel expense accommodation and subsistence. Conference places (free) will also be offered to the authors of other high scoring essays. Authors of high scoring essays may be invited to make a short presentation about their essay at the EPSIG annual meeting or conference.

How often? Annual. Where presented ? The annual conference,

Who can apply? Medical students and trainees from UK medical schools and training schemes may submit the essay.

Rules: The essay should be no more than 5000 words including footnotes and appendix. The bibliography can be an addition the word count.

The essay should be researched from relevant literature and based on evolutionary theory (Neo-Darwinian).

Essays which are purely written around clinical cases are not eligible.

The essay can be on any topic related to evolution and psychiatry, however historical accounts of Darwin, psychiatric misuse and Eugenics are not what are being sought.

Some examples of possible topics:

- How does evolutionary theory help explain human vulnerability to mental illness?
- Why are so many people depressed and how does evolution inform theories of emotion?
- If schizophrenia is partly genetic and so bad for human reproduction, how come the genes persist?
- How can evolutionary theory help psychiatrists delineate psychiatric disorders?
- Why are humans one of the only species to survive a long time beyond actively reproductive years and what can evolutionary theories tell us about old age and dementia?

Please also include short curriculum vitae

The examining panel may decide in certain circumstances that an oral discussion may be necessary.

The prize will be advertised in the spring preceding the year of award.

The prize will be judged by a panel appointed by the EPSIG committee and their decision is final.

The winner of the prize will be awarded £500 and a bursary to attend the EPSIG conference. Please use double-spacing and font at 12 pt

Marking will be based on content, presentation and scientific merit. Criteria for judging will include clarity of expression, understanding of the literature and evidence, cogency of argument and overall ability to convey enthusiasm and originality within a set word limit

Entries will be shortlisted and judged by a panel appointed by our EPSIG committee. Should a minimum standard not be achieved, prizes may not be awarded. The winning essay will be published on our website.

Submissions

Please send your essay and curriculum vitae as email attachments marking the email EPSIG Essay Prize to