

NEWSLETTER of the IASP® Special Interest Group on

# Pain from Torture, Organized Violence, and War

July 2008

## Interim Committee

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### Secretary

Richard Payne, USA

### Treasurer

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Timely topics in pain research and treatment have been selected for publication, but the information provided and opinions expressed in this SIG on Pain from Torture, Organized Violence, and War newsletter have not involved any verification by the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP)® or the SIG on Pain from Torture, Organized Violence, and War of the findings, conclusions, and opinions stated in this publication. Thus, opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of its author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of IASP® or the SIG on Pain from Torture, Organized Violence, and War, or of the Officers or Councilors of IASP® or of the Officers of the SIG on Pain from Torture, Organized Violence, and War. No responsibility is assumed by IASP® or SIG on Pain from Torture, Organized Violence, and War for any injury and/or damage to persons or property resulting, whether as a matter of product liability, negligence or otherwise, from any use of or reliance on any methods, products, instruction or ideas contained in this publication. Because of the rapid advances in the medical sciences, the publisher recommends independent verification of any diagnoses and drug dosages referenced in this publication.

## Message from the Chair

This is just a brief newsletter to represent our SIG at the IASP World Congress. If you have picked this up at the Congress and you're not a member of the SIG, please think of joining us — we're keen to grow and develop our activities. You might like to contribute to our newsletters, which are usually more substantial (see below), or to network among clinicians and researchers in the SIG, or to involve SIG members in educational or research activities around the topic of pain from torture, organized violence, and war. If you're an existing member, please share with others why the SIG matters to you, encourage them to come to the workshop at the Congress, and to visit the website.

In this newsletter are the results of our recent elections; events of particular interest at the World Congress; notice of another publication by a member; and an index of substantive articles from previous newsletters, all of which are available on the website: [www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/Research-Groups/PainSIG/pain\\_sig-home](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/Research-Groups/PainSIG/pain_sig-home)

Amanda C de C Williams, SIG Chair

## Election of Officers

New officers for the SIG were elected uncontested and will take up their positions at the AGM at the World Congress in August 2008:

**Chair:** outgoing, Amanda C de C Williams; incoming, Kirstine Amris

**Chair-elect:** outgoing, Kirstine Amris; incoming, Fernando Cervero

**Secretary:** Richard Payne will continue to serve.

**Treasurer:** outgoing, Carlos Nebreda; incoming, Dominic Aldington

This is a great mix of "new and old hands," and we are grateful to all those who are willing to take on these responsibilities.

Two non-elected posts also become vacant: Jannie Van Der Merwe has been the midwife (and more) for the twice yearly newsletters, and stands down, so the new officers will be happy to appoint a volunteer replacement; Kirstine Amris has been a distinguished research officer since 2005 and would appreciate sharing, if not handing over, the duties of supporting research in the SIG, as she will take over as Chair.

The next newsletter will have brief biographies and statements from the new SIG officers: those for existing ones can be found in the January 2007 newsletter.

## Purposes of the SIG

- To promote the recognition and appropriate treatment of pain resulting from torture, organized violence, and war.
- To promote mutual education and training of health care workers who care for survivors of torture, organized violence, and war, and those who work in pain services.
- To promote liaison and exchange of information between pain treatment services and organizations working with survivors of torture, organized violence, and war.
- To foster research on all aspects of pain resulting from torture, organized violence, and war.
- To establish an international forum within the pain field for discussion and action, using knowledge about pain to mitigate the health effects of torture, organized violence, and war.

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### Publication by member

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We have another notification of a publication by a member of the SIG: it would be very good if this could become a regular feature! Karen Prip, a physiotherapist who is very experienced in work with torture survivors at the RCT

in Denmark, has published the following: Prip K, Persson AL. Clinical findings in men with chronic pain after falanga torture. *Clinical Journal of Pain* 2008, 24, 135-141.

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### Guide to substantive articles in previous newsletters (which can be downloaded from the website)

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#### July 2005

- Pain treatment in the wake of war: Dr. Phil Lacoux, Dr. Bill Macrae. These two experienced pain doctors describe their work with amputees in pain in a refugee camp in Sierra Leone, within a Medecins sans Frontieres initiative.

#### July 2006

- Group treatment for pain at RCT in Copenhagen: Dr. Gunilla Brodda Jansen. This describes the innovative application of cognitive behavioral pain rehabilitation (pain school) to groups of torture survivors, with details of the program itself and of outcomes.
- The “ticking bomb” argument used to support terror: Dr. Amanda Williams. This discusses and rejects, on moral, legal, and medical/psychological grounds, the commonly invoked scenario of justifying torture to obtain information which might save lives.

#### January 2007

- Chronic pain and torture survivors: intersecting lines and lines of demarcation: Dr. Michael Nutkiewicz. The author was then Executive Director at the Program for Torture Victims, Los Angeles, as well as part of the pain study group at the University of California at LA. He draws fascinating comparisons between the in-

visible problems of chronic pain and of the aftermath of torture.

#### August 2007

- Post-traumatic stress disorder. This is a summary of a controversial paper in the *British Medical Journal* about the psychological treatment of trauma, including of torture survivors, and of the vigorous and extended responses it elicited from many people in the field.

#### March 2008

- What do we need to progress research in chronic post-torture pain? Dr. Kirstine Amris reviews the influences on research in this area and outlines an agenda for research, arguing for an overarching contextual approach to measurement.
- Health care professionals, ethics, and the culture of abuse. This briefly provides the varied professional guidelines or policies concerning taking part in, or turning a blind eye to, abuse of prisoners, including torture. Most of our own professional bodies have explicit principles and procedures — some of them excellent, others weak — but many of us are unaware of them or how to use them.

**SIG Website:** on [www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-health-psychology/Research-Groups/PainSIG](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-health-psychology/Research-Groups/PainSIG)

Please email contributions for a newsletter or for the website to:

Amanda Williams at [amanda.williams@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:amanda.williams@ucl.ac.uk) or Jannie Van Der Merwe at [jannie.vandermerwe@realhealth.org.uk](mailto:jannie.vandermerwe@realhealth.org.uk)

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### Notable events to be held at the World Congress

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#### **Inge Genefke - John D. Loeser Distinguished Lecture**

**Tuesday, 19 August, 14:30**, the John D Loeser Distinguished Lecture will be given by Dr. Inge Genefke, with the title, “Pain and Suffering Following Torture.” Dr. Genefke is a founding member of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims in Denmark and has had a major impact on the field of treatment of torture survivors.

#### **SIG TOVW ‘Annual’ General Meeting**

**Wednesday, 20 August, 16:30-17:30 in Gala 2** room of the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow

#### **Posters**

Look out for posters on pain in survivors of torture, organized violence, and war, as they may crop up across sections as organized, and on different days.

#### **Workshop**

**Friday, 22 August, 16:00-17:30 in the Dochart Room** – for those who are not completely conference-crazed by that time – is a workshop entitled “Using Pain Expertise in Work with Survivors of Torture and War.”

After a brief introduction on “Resources for More Effective Assessment of Pain Problems” in this context by Dr. Amanda Williams (UK), Dr. Marie-Claude Gregoire (Canada) will talk about “Children and War: Specific Issues in Relation to Pain,” and Dr. Phil Lacoux (UK) will speak on “Processes of Pain Assessment and Treatment for Survivors.” The speakers will then form a panel to take questions and facilitate discussion on how, as clinicians and researchers, we can best extend our services and concerns to such groups.

<p><b>SIG Membership Information:</b> Currently, the SIG TOVW has 64 members in 20 countries, representing 18 disciplines. Become a SIG member by indicating the SIG on TOVW and paying \$20 SIG dues with your IASP membership dues.</p>
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