

# NEWSLETTER

## Winter 2015

### In the newsletter:

- **Conference report:**
  - European Williams-Beuren Syndrome Conference.....1
  - The 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Psychophysiology.....2
- **Upcoming conferences.....2**
- **Introducing research institutes in East-Central Europe:**
  - Child Clinical Neuropsychology Unit, Department of Psychology (University of Geneva, Switzerland).....5

## Conference reports

European Williams-Beuren Syndrome Conference  
21-23 Nov. 2014, Budapest, Hungary

“The EWSC in Budapest was a great mix of very interesting talks by highly recognized speakers from various European countries, a poster session where I had the opportunity to present my own poster, and participants not only from the research field and several European WS-Associations, but also individuals with WS and their families. I was impressed by the friendly and familiar atmosphere at the congress, which made it very easy to start up conversations with other participants during coffee breaks, or at the social events. Besides, due to the many famous sights in Budapest and the excellent transportation links from the conference location to the city centre, spending the free time was pretty easy, too.”

*Stefanie Helmert*

European University of Applied Sciences, Rostock, Germany

“The 2014 European Williams-Beuren Syndrome Conference, held in Budapest in November, was a very interesting and stimulating experience for me. I appreciated the choice of the main topics and the high scientific level of the presentations. Moreover, an informal and friendly environment furthered knowledge/competence sharing among participants, coming from several European countries. During the Conference, different types of professionals worked together and in collaboration with families, for providing a more effective assistance and for ensuring a better quality of life to individuals with WS. Even the topic of my poster entitled “Sexuality in Individuals with Williams Syndrome: What Help for Their Parents?” was discussed with great interest, in a holistic view and without prejudice. I surely went back from Budapest not only with an update on WS but also with a lot of new ideas and some new friends!”

*Rosalia Maria Da Rioli*

Centre for Rare Diseases, University Hospital of Udine, Italy

“It was great pleasure for me to be a participant of this Conference. It was valuable for my professional experience. The range of topics discussed at the conference was large, but very well planned. Everybody could find out some things for himself. For me, because of my profession, the best was the linguistic part and the educational one. I was glad, that despite of the official programme lectures there was a time to have an opportunity to discuss and give a comment to the actual topic. Beyond the scientific programme the organizers gave us also very good social programme.”

*Joanna Witkowska*

Williams Syndrome Association, Poland

## **The 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Psychophysiology**

23-27 Sept. 2014, Hiroshima, Japan

The *International Association for Psychophysiology* organized its 17th conference between 23–27 September in Hiroshima, Japan. This was the first time that the IOP congress took place in East Asia thus being an important milestone for further development and promotion of international collaboration and discussion among psychophysiologicalists around the world. The program of IOP2014 included keynote lectures, didactic lectures, symposia, and poster sessions. The topics of presentation covered all areas of psychophysiology. The accepted abstracts are published in a special issue of *International Journal of Psychophysiology*. At social events, participants could enjoy various types of Japanese cuisine and sake (Japanese rice wine).

### **Here is what participants say:**

“Fascinating Japan. Perfect organization of the event. Wide spectrum of the scientific research. Variety of obtained results with some inspiring findings and ideas.”

*Nickolay A. Almayev, Russia*

Budapest, Hungary



For more information, see the conference [website](#)

Hiroshima, Japan



“The works presented in the conference showed a perfect blend between classical subjects such as ERP/MMN and power analysis, on the one hand, and new ideas such as brain connectivity or transcranial stimulation (whether magnetic, current or ultrasound). Specific sessions on these topics intermingled with plenary keynote lectures of leading world scientist from Japan, USA, Europe and Australia, and the poster sessions took place in the very same room where coffee break and lunches were served, an interesting concept that certainly helped both the scientific and the social aspect of the conference. There was also time for the remembrance of scientists in the field who recently passed away, notably Prof. Dietrich Lehmann from the University of Berne.

For such a mixture between tradition and modernity as well as for remembrance, Japan in general and Hiroshima in particular were the perfect scenario. Not in vain the conference’s venue was at walking distance from the place where the A-bomb was dropped, something which is reminded to the city inhabitants and visitors every morning by the ring of a bell. In a place where everything pays homage to peace and harmony among all the people in the world, we all felt comfort in the thought that science is contributing to these aims.”



Hiroshima, Japan

*Ernesto Pereda*  
University of La Laguna, Spain

For more information, see the conference [website](#)

## Upcoming conferences:

### Dubrovnik Conference on Cognitive Science (DUCOG)

21-23 May 2015, Dubrovnik, Croatia

It is our pleasure to invite you to the *VII. Dubrovnik Conference on Cognitive Science* on ‘Metacognition and Reasoning’ organized by the *Central European Cognitive Science Association (CECOG)*.

We are glad to announce our **keynote speakers**: *Klaus Fiedler* (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg), *Asher Koriat* (University of Haifa), *Joelle Proust* (Jean Nicod Institute, CNRS, Paris), *Nicholas Shea* (King’s College London), *Valerie Thompson* (University of Saskatchewan), *Maggie Toplak* (York University).

**Abstract submission deadline:** 28. Febr. 2015. CECOG offers financial support for up to 15 student participants from the Central European region.



Dubrovnik, Croatia

For more information, see the conference [website](#)

## Other conferences that might be of your interest

### **International Conference on Cognitive Modelling**

9-11 April 2015, Groningen, the Netherlands  
Submission deadline: 15th February

### **Creating Connections 2015 – Int'l Conference on Attachment, Neuroscience and Emotions**

16-17 April 2015, Efteling, the Netherlands  
Early registration deadline: 15th January

### **Third International Conference on Aging & Cognition**

23-25 April 2015, Dortmund, Germany  
Early registration deadline: 16th January

### **Language, Cognition and Society Conference**

26-28 May 2015, Grenoble, France  
Abstract submission deadline: 5th January 2015

### **The 2015 Sleep Summit**

2-4 June 2015, London, UK  
Abstract submission deadline: 10th March 2015  
Bursaries to cover registration fee will be considered.

### **Toward a Science of Consciousness Conference**

9-13 June 2015, Helsinki, Finland  
Registration opens: 22nd January

### **Third International Conference on Cognitive Hearing Science for Communication**

14-17 June 2015, Linköping, Sweden  
Early registration deadline: 15th March 2015

### **The Society for Cognitive Studies of the Moving Image Conference**

17-20 June 2015, Birkbeck, UK  
Student awards are available to support attendance!

### **International Conference on Interdisciplinary Advances in Statistical Learning**

25-27 June 2015, San Sebastian, Spain  
Abstract submission deadline: 1st March 2015

### **12th International Symposium of Psycholinguistics**

1-4 July 2015, Valencia, Spain  
Abstract submission deadline: 16th February 2015

### **The International Association for Cognitive Education and Psychology XV Biennial International Conference**

6-8 July 2015, Athens, Greece

### **19th annual meeting of the Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness**

7-10 July 2015, Paris, France

### **The 43rd British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies Conference and Workshops**

21-24 July 2015, Warwick, UK  
Abstract submission deadline: 27th February 2015

### **XVIII. European Conference on Eye Movements**

16-21 August 2015, Vienna, Austria  
Abstract submission deadline: 1st March 2015

### **European Conference on Visual Perception**

23-27 August 2015, Liverpool, UK

Abstract submission deadline: 1st April 2015

### **The Colour and Visual Computing Symposium 2015**

25-26 August 2015, Gjøvik, Norway

Abstract submission deadline: 15th March 2015

The best student paper will be awarded by a special committee

### **45th Annual European Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Therapies Congress**

31 August - 3 September, Jerusalem, Israel

Abstract submission deadline: 1st May 2015

### **Argumentation & Language Conference**

9-11 September 2015, Lausanne, Switzerland

Abstract submission deadline: 15th January 2015

Early registration deadline: 31st May 2015

### **19th Conference of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology**

17-20 September, Phaos, Cyprus

Abstract submission deadline: 30 April 2015

### **British Association for Cognitive Neuroscience Meeting**

10-11 September 2015, Colchester, England

Registration will open soon!

### **Polish Cognitive Linguistics Association**

24-26 September 2015, Lublin, Poland

Abstract submission deadline: 21st September 2015

### **EuroAsianPacific Joint Conference on Cognitive Science**

24-27 September 2015, Torino, Italy

Registration and submission will open soon!

## **Introducing research institutes in East-Central Europe:**

Child Clinical Neuropsychology Unit,  
Department of Psychology

University of Geneva, Switzerland

The Child Clinical Neuropsychology Unit, led by Professor K. Barisnikov PhD, has focused on cognitive functioning and socio-emotional abilities in developmental disorders such as Down Syndrome, William Syndrome (WS) and cerebral palsy, as well as the impact of premature birth on these abilities.



Comparative studies of individuals with Down's Syndrome, with intellectual disabilities of a non-specific origin, and with a typical development, have led to successful goals. Firstly, the team developed specific and adapted assessment tools for a Francophone population, such as the "Socio-Cognitive and Emotion Battery" (Barisnikov & Hippolyte, 2011), and validated behaviour questionnaires with Dr. C. Straccia. Secondly, social and emotional processing abilities in relation to behavioural difficulties (e.g. emotion recognition, socio-conceptual knowledge) were also studied in these populations with Prof. Detraux. Finally, based on these results, the "Socio-Emotional Skills Reeducation Program" was developed in collaboration with A. Lachavanne. In a cooperation program with Russian universities (Prof. Zinchenko), Olga Vorontsova-Wenger PhD student is

studying the effect of a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program among university students in Swiss and Russian samples in collaboration with the University St-Petersburg (Prof. Ababkov).

Specific areas of research in WS have also investigated mechanisms underlying language skills and memory, visuo-perceptual and visuo-constructional memory, visuo-perceptual and visuo-constructional abilities, as well as haptic perceptions of texture. Several research projects on verbal abilities (verbal short-term memory and phonological awareness) were also conducted with Prof. Majerus-PhD (University of Liege). Studies of visuo-spatial skills in WS children and adults were carried out in collaboration with J. Heiz-PhD student and Dr. Saj. The team specifically studied mechanisms underlining spatial orientation and mental rotation abilities to develop re-education strategies targeting visuospatial difficulties. Studies on sensory information processing abilities (e.g. haptic and visual perception) in WS population were conducted in collaboration with C. Cheam-PhD student and Prof. Gentaz and aimed to understand of the nature of difficulties caused by “defensive” hypersensitivities and their impact on everyday activities.

The team collaborated with Prof. Hüppi and her colleagues at the HUG and CHUV, to investigate the impact of prematurity on the development of executive function (EF), behaviour, and learning with follow-up studies from birth to adolescence. In collaboration with Dr. F. Lejeune, Dr. M. Réveillon and E. Martin-PhD student, studies were conducted on full-term and preterm children to identify specific deficits in EF inhibition, emotion processing and regulation abilities. In collaboration with several research laboratories lead by Prof. Hüppi, Lazeyras, Gentaz and Sanders, fMRI techniques were also employed.



*Julie Heiz*  
PhD student

### Recent publications from this research group

Barisnikov, K., Hippolyte, L. (2011). Batterie d'évaluation de la cognition sociale et émotionnelle. In N. Nader-Grosbois (Ed.), *Théorie de l'esprit: Entre cognition, émotion et adaptation sociale chez des personnes typiques et atypiques* (pp. 135-151). Bruxelles, Belgique: De Boeck.

Cheam, C., Gentaz, E., Barisnikov, K. (2014). Haptic perception of everyday texture in children and adults with Williams syndrome (Oral symposium: "L'étude du toucher et ses applications", 28th International Congress of Applied Psychology, Paris, 8-13th July).

Heiz, J., Barisnikov, K. (submitted). How Flexible is the Visuospatial Reference System in Children Aged 4 to 12 and Adults?

Lejeune, F., Borradori Tolsa, C., Bickle Graz, M., Hüppi, P. S., Barisnikov, K. (in press). Emotion, attention, and effortful control in 24-month-old very preterm and full-term children. *L'année Psychologique/ Topics in Cognitive Psychology*.

Réveillon, M., Urben, S., Borradori Tolsa, C., Barisnikov, K., Hüppi, P. S., Lazeyras, F. (2013). Functional neuroimaging study of performances on a Go/No-go task in 6- to 7-year-old preterm children: Impact of intrauterine growth restriction. *NeuroImage: Clinical*, 3, 429-437.

Straccia, C., Baggio, S., Barisnikov, K. (2014). Mental Illness, Behavior Problems, and Social Behavior in Adults With Down Syndrome. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 7(1), 74-90.