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## Reflections on a successful year of the Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology

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EDITORIAL



## Reflections on a successful year of the Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology

As 2023 is drawing to a close, it is timely for us, the committee of the Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology (SRIP), to pause and reflect upon what has been achieved this year and update our Society members and readers of our affiliated journal 'The Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology (JRIP)' on the plans outlined earlier in the year (Garthus-Niegel & Horsch, 2023).

We begin by congratulating our colleagues from the scientific and conference organising committees for such a successful 2023 conference – our first in person conference since 2019 – in Lausanne (Switzerland) in September. It was truly delightful to see so many colleagues in person, and to listen to as well as discuss such stimulating and thought-provoking talks. It was also wonderful to welcome our growing Early Career Researcher (ECR) community, many of whom have undertaken their doctoral research during a global pandemic with fewer opportunities for in-person international dissemination. This year's conference was also particularly successful because it reflected the three strategic objectives set by the committee at the beginning of the year: 1) growth and internationalisation; 2) greater visibility and activity; and 3) continued collaboration with the ECR group.

In terms of growth and internationalisation, we are pleased to report that our society's membership covers 13 countries, with the committee membership now spanning eight nationalities. Similarly, the JRIP editorial board significantly internationalised, and now represents 13 countries. The 2023 conference was another successful indicator of our drive towards internationalisation with delegates from 20 countries across four continents. Turning to the future, we are pleased to announce that the next SRIP 2024 conference will take place in Dresden (Germany) (16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024). We will also turn our attention further afield and seek to develop collaborations with academics from non-Western countries, and we are planning a series of initiatives to support this: 1) working more closely with maternal health societies from non-Western countries, 2) creating dedicated calls for research development workshop grants, 3) organising webinars to feature prominent researchers as well as inviting future conference keynote speakers from countries traditionally less represented.

With regards to our objective to create greater visibility and activity, for the first time, we have collaborated with the Marcé Society and The International Society of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ISPOG) to hold SRIP symposia at their respective international conferences. Professor Fiona Alderdice led the symposium at ISPOG on 'Assessing Mental Health in Perinatal Care: Opportunities for change', and Professor Antje Horsch chaired the symposium at the Marcé conference on the topic of 'Fathers' and other co-parents' perinatal mental health'. Both symposia were very well received and helped to publicise our conference, attracting some delegates to their first SRIP conference. We also collaborated with the multidisciplinary networks COST Action CA18211 and INTERSECT Consortium and invited

them to present two symposia at this year's conference. Looking ahead, Prof. Danny Horesh, Dr. Liat Helpman, and other members of the Israeli branch of ISPOG, will write an editorial on 'pregnancy and childbirth in the face of war' for one of the spring JRIP issues, further underlining our collaboration across scientific societies. We anticipate more such collaborations in the future. These will facilitate cross-fertilisation of knowledge and collaboration between societies with similar interests, while simultaneously increasing SRIP's visibility internationally. JRIP's continued growth as a journal also demonstrates our increased visibility as a well-recognised and prestigious scientific platform, with the impact factor for the journal more than doubling since 2019 (from 1.2 to 2.5). Future activities to increase SRIP activity include fostering research collaborations, and webinars showcasing SRIP's diverse body of eminent researchers and their programmes of work.

Developing our offering in terms of support, encouragement, and facilitation of ECRs has represented a recent step-wise change in approach for SRIP. This was evidenced at the annual conference in Lausanne where a very well-attended mentoring workshop was delivered. Organised by Lara Seefeld, it brought together ECRs and established academics from the perinatal field. Group discussions focused on factors for ECRs to consider in terms of their career trajectories, and on appraising the barriers and facilitators to developing successful academic careers. There was also plenty of feedback on what seemed to work and not work from more experienced researchers. This year, the ECR group also established the first SRIP Mentorship Programme, successfully bringing together 15 mentee/mentor pairs from 10 countries. We look forward to the continuation of this programme with a second round of applications opening early 2024.

As a committee, we are proud of our achievements this year and are keen to continue developing the Society and its affiliated journal further, our main objective being to improve maternal, infant, and family health from a reproductive and psychological perspective. We look forward to a successful 2024, to grow and diversify our activities as well as to welcome new members to the Society.

## Reference

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