Main Events

Professor Denis Mareschal named APS Fellow

Professor Denis Mareschal has been named a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science. The APS is a professional organisation dedicated to the advancement of scientific psychology and its representation at the national and international level, and its mission is to promote, protect, and advance the interests of scientifically oriented psychology in research, application, teaching, and the improvement of human welfare. Fellow status is awarded to APS Members who ‘have made sustained outstanding contributions to the science of psychology’. Professor Mareschal’s research focuses on perceptual and cognitive development in infancy and childhood.

Dr Emily Jones awarded L’Oréal Women in Science Fellowship

Dr Emily Jones, a research fellow at Birkbeck’s Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development (CBCD), has been awarded a 2013 L’Oréal-UNESCO UK & Ireland For Women in Science Fellowship (FWIS) in recognition of her work on casual pathways to autism. ‘I am privileged to receive the L’Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science fellowship,’ said Dr Jones. ‘The fellowship will allow me to buy crucial equipment that I require to investigate the link between attention and arousal in the development of autism. Combining a research career with family responsibilities can be challenging, and the flexible support provided by the fellowship will help me achieve the right balance.’ Dr Jones is a member of Professor Mark Johnson’s research group at Birkbeck’s Babylab. She has a particular interest in the early development of basic skills in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, since this can shed light on the causes behind the condition and show where early intervention can be most effective.

Research Highlights

Birkbeck joins Bloomsbury Centre for Genetic Epidemiology and Statistics

Birkbeck has become an official member of the Bloomsbury Centre for Genetic Epidemiology and Statistics (BCGES), a collaborative venture between the Department of Psychological Sciences’ Genetics Grouping, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and UCL. The Centre aims to advance the understanding of the genetic mechanisms underlying health and disease through the development and application of computational tools and quantitative methods and models, and to foster collaborative links between genetics research groups in the London area. BCGES is currently accepting applications for its introductory short courses in statistical genomics, to be held at Birkbeck later this year.
Research Highlights cont’d

Future Directions for Genetic Research in Infancy

Kostas Papageorgiou, a Marie Curie PhD student at the CBCD, and his supervisor, Dr Angelica Ronald, have conducted a systematic review of all studies that have aimed to identify common genetic variants associated with psychological traits in infancy. Their findings, which are published in the journal Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews (see Publications, below) revealed inconsistency across a considerable number of candidate gene studies published. The authors propose that infant genetic work would benefit from employing newer genetic research designs and options are discussed for overcoming the challenge of obtaining large sample sizes for genetic research on infants.

Publications

Articles


Papageorgiou, K. A. & Ronald, A. (2013). ‘He who sees things grow from the beginning will have the finest view of them’: A systematic review of genetic studies on psychological traits in infancy. Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 37, 1500–1517.


Book Chapters


Invited Talks

**Dr Iroise Dumontheil** gave an invited talk entitled ‘Development of social cognition during adolescence’ at the Eating Disorders group seminar, Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College, on 28 January, and a seminar entitled ‘What is special about social cognition?’ at the Département d’Études Cognitives, École Normale Supérieure de Paris, France, on 9 April.

**Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith** gave an invited talk on sleep-related consolidation of learning at Canterbury College.

**Dr Emma Meaburn** gave an invited lecture entitled ‘Allele-specific DNA methylation across brain and blood’ at the Bloomsbury Centre for Genetic Epidemiology and Statistics Annual meeting at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on 11 June.

**Professor Ted Melhuish** undertook a lecture tour funded by the the McCain Foundation of Canada to inform provisional governments in Ottawa, Toronto, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia of the evidence of long-term benefits of investing in the early years, in May. Professor Melhuish also gave a keynote address to the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs in Gatineau, Québec. While in Canada, Professor Melhuish gave numerous radio, press and TV interviews. Professor Melhuish also gave a presentation on ‘Early Years Evidence and Policy’ to the Dutch Parliament in the Hague, Netherlands, organised by the the Bernard van Leer Foundation, in June. In addition, Professor Melhuish gave invited evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education regarding the evidence on Sure Start children’s centres.

**Dr Angelica Ronald** gave an invited talk entitled ‘Why do autism and ADHD co-occur?’ at the Autism Today conference in London on 5 July. The meeting is specifically for parents, clinicians, therapists, teachers and consultants working with individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

Grants, Awards, & Recognition

Research by **Professor Ted Melhuish** was featured as a case study in *Making the case for the social sciences: Longitudinal studies*, a publication produced by the Academy of Social Sciences as part of its Campaign for Social Science. The Campaign was launched in 2011 to advocate social science to the UK Government and to the public.

Conference Activity

**Joanne Camp** won runner-up for her poster entitled ‘Problem solving in Williams Syndrome, Down Syndrome and typical development: Executive function and patterns of performance’ presented at the Bloomsbury Colleges Research Students’ Symposium 2013. Joanne is pursuing her PhD at Birkbeck under the supervision of Dr Emily Farran (Institute of Education), **Professor Michael Thomas**, and **Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith**.

**Saloni Krishnan** won first prize for her poster entitled ‘Oromotor control and imitation predict novel word production in the school years’ presented at the Child Language Conference in Manchester. Saloni is pursuing her PhD at Birkbeck under the supervision of **Dr Fred Dick** and **Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith**.

Conference Presentations

