

News About Action on Puerperal Psychosis

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DR. IAN JONES JOINS THE TEAM

At the beginning of this month, Dr. Ian Jones is joining the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Birmingham as a research fellow funded by the Wellcome Trust (a major medical research charity). He will be working closely with Professor Craddock and focussing on research into the molecular (biochemical) changes that occur during puerperal psychosis. Over the next 3 years Dr. Jones will be contacting many of you about this project. You may also hear from Dr. Jaime Morey, a Spanish psychiatrist based at the University of Wales Medical School in Cardiff, who will be assisting with this project as part of his Masters Degree.

Molecular Psychiatry Laboratory

A state of the art Molecular Biology laboratory is being opened at the University of Birmingham Medical School to facilitate molecular research in psychiatric illnesses including puerperal psychosis. The laboratory, headed by Professor Nick Craddock, Professor of Molecular Psychiatry, is located within the main Medical School buildings at the University of Birmingham and provides facilities and equipment for "cutting edge" research that it is hoped will lead to improvements in our understanding of the causation of illness and ultimately to major improvements in care for sufferers. These facilities have been made available by major investments of resources by the University of Birmingham and South Birmingham Mental Health Trust together with grants from the Medical Research Council, The Wellcome Trust and the Women's Mental Health Charity. A major project that will be undertaken within the laboratory is the molecular investigation of puerperal psychosis which will be spearheaded by Dr. Ian Jones. Other large scale projects that will be undertaken include molecular studies of manic depressive illness (Bipolar disorder) and molecular studies of dementias.

ANY QUESTIONS?

In future editions of the newsletter we would like to answer some of your questions about puerperal psychosis. There seems to be very little information available for the general public and we would like to start putting this right. We need to get an idea of what you would like to know. Please send your questions to Jackie Benjamin. We will start giving some answers in the next newsletter due out in October. We would also like these questions to help us write some comprehensive information leaflets aimed at sufferers and their families.

CORRESPONDING PANEL CHANGES ITS NAME

You'll see from the title of this newsletter that we've decided to drop the name "Puerperal Psychosis Corresponding Panel " in favour of " Action on Puerperal Psychosis "(or APP for short) which we think is a bit catchier .and conveys our aims better.

NEW QUESTIONNAIRE

We have devised a short questionnaire dealing with some basic medical and personal information which women who have joined APP in recent months have been asked to join. The purpose of the questionnaire is to enable us to see easily which research projects a member might be suitable for. Eventually we intend to send this questionnaire to all members .

CAN YOU HELP US SPREAD THE WORD?

We're constantly trying to let more women know about APP and how they could help with research into puerperal psychosis . We've produced a leaflet about APP which explains what we do and how to contact us. A copy of the leaflet is being sent out to everyone who receives this newsletter. If you know someone who has had puerperal psychosis and might be interested in joining APP, please pass the leaflet on. Some of you may be able to pass the leaflet on to your GP , health visitor or support group. Please feel free to photocopy the leaflet or contact Jackie Benjamin or Jennifer Davies for more copies.

PUERPERAL PSYCHOSIS INTERVIEWS

Dr. Doshi, who is carrying out the analysis for this project and conducting some of the interviews, is expecting her first baby this summer. Consequently she will not be doing any more interviews for a while. Julia Giles will be continuing to carry out interviews and will be seeking to interview:

- women who have had at least 1 episode of puerperal psychosis
- and at least 1 other unaffected pregnancy
- **or** another episode of psychosis not related to pregnancy

LITHIUM PROPHYLAXIS TRIAL

Dr. Abubhakar has now returned to Malaysia, and hopes to continue with this research there. Professor Brockington will be continuing this trial in Birmingham. Please contact us if you are currently pregnant and would like to more about this trial which is being conducted to establish whether or not lithium or haloperidol can be effective to prevent recurrences of puerperal psychosis .

MIND INFOLINE

Mind, the national mental health charity, provides a telephone information service to members of the public, professionals, students, anybody with a question or problem. The lines are open Mondays to Fridays 9.15 am to 4.45 pm. You can reach them on 0345 660 163 (outside London) or 0181 522 1728 (Greater London).

CONTACTS

You can write to Jackie Benjamin or any other member of the team at

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