

# WAIMH comes to Africa

In 2012 the International Congress of the World Association for Infant Mental Health will, for the first time, be held on the African Continent.

Cape Town, the chosen host, has a well established history of involvement with Infant Mental Health. It is also fittingly known as “the Mother City”! Previous conferences on related fields held in Cape Town attracted much attention and were instrumental in establishing infant mental health as an important multi-disciplinary field in South Africa. The Western Cape Association for Infant Mental Health, established in 1995, has since become an active multi-disciplinary body with monthly meetings, as well as providing a forum for visiting colleagues to present their work.

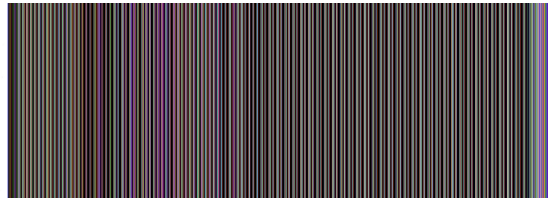
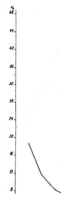
Whilst most infants live in developing countries they are underrepresented in scientific studies. As a result, the evidence base for clinical interventions comes from the wealthier parts of the world - interventions which are not necessarily applicable or practical in lower and middle income countries. This first international conference on infant mental health in Africa provides the ideal platform from which to redress this imbalance. In addition, the creative and innovative interventions that arise out of circumstance and necessity offer fascinating insights into what can be achieved with relatively few resources. It is befitting that Africa hosts the World Association of Infant Mental Health, which has made it its goal to be truly multi-national and culturally diverse.

South Africa, and in particular Cape Town, offers a unique context for this event to take place: the infra-structure of the city is sophisticated; the International Convention Centre is an ideal venue, safe and conveniently situated near hotels and tourist attractions. Besides these advantages, there is the wider perspective that South Africa brings: it has emerged from politically dark, repressive times into a vibrant nation where debate is open and vigorous and where many cultures and languages co-exist in tolerance and acceptance. Its people are warm and hospitable and are willing to share their view points and experiences. Attending this Conference will offer an opportunity for exchange and learning for all.

The Local Organizing Committee

Cape Town, South Africa

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The photos by Local Organising Committee / WAIMH 13th World Congress.