

# WAIMH Awards 2020

By Astrid Berg, South Africa, David Oppenheim, Israel, Dilys Daws, United Kingdom and Campbell Paul, Australia

WAIMH offers awards in recognition of individuals from across the world who have made very important contributions to the infant mental health community in the course of their careers. As an interdisciplinary organization, WAIMH invites nominations from the fields of health, mental health, early care and education, early intervention, hospitals, colleges and universities, and legislatures, to name just a few.

Recently, three WAIMH members were honored with the following awards:

1. The Serge Lebovici Award recipient for 2020: Dr Miri Keren
2. The WAIMH Award recipient for 2020: Professor Jane Barlow
3. New Investigator Award recipient for 2020: Dr Lars White

Each awardee was presented their award virtually during the WAIMH webinars that occurred in mid-June. All things going well, the current plan is to conduct award ceremonies, in person, in Brisbane at the 2021 Congress. On behalf of WAIMH, we congratulate Dr Miri Keren, Professor Jane Barlow, and Dr Lars White as recipients of these awards.

## The Serge Lebovici Award recipient for 2020: Dr Miri Keren



The Serge Lebovici Award is given in recognition of significant contributions to the international development of Infant Mental Health. Nominees are individuals who have been actively involved in collaborative efforts that have cross-national implications for infant mental health.

Dr Miri Keren embodies the spirit of this award because of her vision in creating and implementing international partnerships on behalf of infants, often in spite of daunting obstacles.

A child psychiatrist by training she is currently the Assistant Clinical Professor at the Sackler Medical School at the Tel Aviv University in Israel. Dr Keren is first and foremost a clinician. As the Director of the Geha Community Infant Mental Health clinic she has devoted her time to treating traumatized infants and their families. For this work she has received numerous national awards. She was the WAIMH Israeli Affiliate President from 2003-2007 and thereafter became its Honorary President.

Dr Keren's work, however, goes far beyond the borders of her country. She has maintained close links with her country of origin, France, through symposia and conference participations. She is invited internationally to give courses, including in China and Spain, where she holds a visiting professorship at Valencia University. She is the Chair of the World Psychiatric Association Section of Perinatal

Psychiatry and is an active member of the Zero to Three Task Force. She played a key role in the development of the DC: 0-5 Diagnostic Classification. Her respect for cultural diversity had a strong influence on the ability of the Task Force to incorporate different perspectives.

A member of the World Association for Infant Mental Health since 1996, she fulfilled the role of editor of the WAIMH official bulletin "The Signal", from 2007 - 2012. She then became the President of WAIMH in 2012. During this time, she was particularly active in drawing up the position paper on Infant Rights, a document that has been presented to and accepted by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The WAIMH Conference in Prague in 2016 marked a highlight of her presidency in that she was able to host it together with the Palestinian Association for Infant Mental Health. Her dedication to the process of peace and reconciliation in Israel-Palestine continues to this day through her ongoing collaboration with colleagues across the border. The joint Hebrew-Arabic translation of two books on traumatized children is a remarkable achievement and a testimony to the painstaking work done by Dr Keren and her Palestinian colleague, Dr Abdallah.

Dr Miri Keren's activities to promote infant mental health internationally, including across borders marked by ongoing violence, make her richly deserving of the Serge Lebovici Award.

## The WAIMH Award recipient for 2020: Professor Jane Barlow



The WAIMH Award is given in recognition of significant contributions to the World Association for Infant Mental Health, either directly or through one of the WAIMH Affiliate Associations.

Professor Jane Barlow is an extremely powerful force in delivering the objectives of the World Association for Infant Mental Health. Jane has been instrumental in improving programs for the mental health of infants, children, and their families in the United Kingdom and way beyond. Jane began her career as a nurse in Lincolnshire, and throughout she has demonstrated an enduring passion for building research, academic rigour, and public advocacy into the foundations of effective health and social services for children and families. Jane is President of the Association for Infant Mental Health UK, and Professor of Evidenced-based Intervention and Policy Evaluation at the University of Oxford.

As the president of the AIMH UK, Professor Barlow has vigorously fostered active participation by all members in the activities of the organisation. Jane has brought together frontline clinicians, researchers, teachers, trainers, and policymakers to make a powerful coalition for the welfare of infants. Recognising the importance of early intervention and supporting those working directly with infants and families, Jane advocated strongly for the profession of nurse health visiting when it was under some threat. Her role in the establishment of the Institute of Health Visiting is just one example of her impact of increased government awareness of and support for early intervention.

Teaching and training have been at the core of her work. As Pro-Dean of Research at Warwick University Jane developed an innovative and globally available online training in infant mental health.

Jane has been a major contributor to workings of WAIMH internationally, as Affiliate Council representative on the Board of WAIMH, and as Associate Editor for the *Infant Mental Health Journal*. She has been an active advocate for prevention of violence within families and across the lifespan.

As chair of the Local Organising Committee of the 2014 WAIMH Congress, Jane was instrumental in the overwhelming success of the Edinburgh Congress and has been actively involved in scientific programme committees for subsequent congresses. She has, through her extensive academic activities, encouraged research and program development for infants and their families.

Professor Jane Barlow through her commitment to infants and families, and to the goals of WAIMH is exceptionally deserving of the WAIMH Award 2020.

## The New Investigator Award 2020 recipient: Dr Lars White (PhD)



Lars White received his PhD in 2015 in Psychology at the University of Leipzig in Germany in cooperation with Max Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology. Dr. White holds two masters degrees: An MSc (Developmental Neuroscience and Psychopathology) from University College in London and an MA (Psychology) from the International Psychoanalytic University in Berlin.

Dr. White is currently Leader of a Research Group at the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics at the University of Leipzig.

In his work, Dr. White studies the

biopsychosocial mechanisms underlying the impact of early childhood relationships on later outcomes. He examines psychosocial risk and protective factors ranging from child maltreatment and peer victimization to attachment representations and social support.

His research goal is to unpack the dysfunctional social cognitive-affective processes, such as mentalizing, attachment representations, cooperativeness, and neurobiological processes, that are thought to lie at the heart of various mental health problems. For example, he has shown that internal attachment-related representations provide the basis for expectations about new encounters with unfamiliar others. Also, with his colleagues, he has developed a model on the neurobiology of attachment disruption and disorganization, making the innovative proposal that disruptions in early caregiving are associated with distinct neurobiological hyper- and hypo-arousal phenotypes based on the extent to which caregivers act as threatening or insufficient sources of co-regulation. He has also contributed to theorizing about the role of fathers in child psychotherapy, drawing on current knowledge of paternal challenging behaviours, triadic competence, and children's father representations.

Dr. White has been able to secure research funding for his work and has an impressive publication record. This includes papers in leading journals of our field, including *Developmental Science*, *Development and Psychopathology*, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *BMC Psychiatry*, and more (and in many of which he is the leading author). Clearly, even at this early stage of his career, he has already made and will undoubtedly continue to make important contributions to the field of developmental psychopathology.