

BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL NEUROPSYCHOANALYSIS SOCIETY

Edited by Maggie Zellner

BULLETIN 24

It is wonderful to follow the development of some of our long-standing regional groups, who continue to expand neuropsychanalytic research, education, and transdisciplinary dialogue around the world. It is also wonderful to witness the birth of new groups. Read below to see what our colleagues are doing! If you are interested in finding neuropsychanalytically minded people to connect with, visit our listing of regional groups at www.neuropsa.org.uk/regional-and-specialist-groups. If you are a member of a group, make sure we have your contact information listed correctly; if you have revisions, please let me know! And if you are forming a new group, we'll be happy to list you on our website and help you get off the ground in any way that we can.

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Psychoanalysis and Neuroscience Chapter of the Argentine Psychoanalytical Association

What has love got to do with neuroscience?

The members of the chapter have dedicated the past six months to a discussion of the literature on the neurochemical correlates of sexual love, taking into account our previous study of the neural correlates of aggressive behaviors. We started from the premise of the Scottish psychoanalyst W. R. Fairbairn that the libido is essentially object-seeking, and not exclusively pleasure-seeking (Fairbairn, 2001).

In accordance with an article by Young (2009), it appears likely that love bonds are brain mechanisms conserved by evolution. In humans, as well as in rats, monkeys, and sheep, the neurohormone oxytocin (Oxy) is related to birth processes and maternal behaviors. A type of prairie rat initiates monogamous bonds when more Oxy is released, similar to the release that occurs in conjunction with maternal behaviors; the conclusion may be drawn that the greater release of Oxy promotes the

formation of both sexual and nonsexual links. The hormone interacts with the dopaminergic transmission in the same brain regions that mediate the addiction to substances such as cocaine, alcohol, and opiates. Similar brain areas, corresponding to reward processes mediated by dopamine, are activated when a mother sees photographs of children and when lovers look at photos of their loved ones. In sum, there is a neurochemical superimposition between the addiction circuits, the formation of sexual pair-bonding, and maternal behaviors.

What happens with regard to the brain areas and the neurotransmitters involved in bonding in the male brain? The regions appear to be the same as those of the female brain, but they are controlled by vasopressin, another neurohormone released by the neurohypophysis. In males, this hormone has been associated with the formation of bonds, aggression in the face of possible competitive rivals, and paternal behaviors such as the cleaning of pups. The variances in the regulating gene for the synthesis of a subtype of the vasopressin receptor, AVPr1A, have been found to predict the likelihood of the formation of bonds. In accordance with Young's research, in humans, different configurations of the AVPr1A gene predict the possibility and the quality of the formation of relationships: males with particular variants are twice as likely to remain single, or, if they are married, to report more difficulties with partners, than are those with another variant. The wives of these receptor-variant carriers also report a higher degree of marital problems or dissatisfaction with their interpersonal relationship.

REFERENCES

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Istanbul Neuropsychanalysis Study Group

Our group has accelerated the building of intercity and international contacts and continued to organize neuropsychanalysis conferences in Istanbul. Here is a progress report on our activities:

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1. Between Istanbul and Izmir, we have established a collaboration with Celal Odağ, the founder of İzmir Halime Odağ Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy Association (www.halimeodagvakfi.com). In December 2011, Gökçe Özkarar, the representative of the Istanbul NPSA Group, interviewed Dr. Odağ—one of the founders of the Düsseldorf Psychoanalysis Institute in Germany—about “The Future of Analysis and Neuropsychoanalysis.” The interview including valuable elaborations on the developmental phases of psychoanalytic theory, emphasizing the importance of “neuropsychoanalysis” as an inevitable phase in the maturation of psychoanalysis. Celal Odağ highlighted the most recognized authors in neuropsychoanalysis and called other psychoanalysts to be open-minded to other disciplines and neuropsychoanalysis. The interview was released to all specialist e-mail groups in Turkey. For the collaborative neuropsychoanalytic studies between Istanbul and Izmir, Celal Odağ initiated the “Little Prince” study group, whose emphasis will be on the biopsychological study of the “limbic system” and affective neuroscience.
2. In January 2012, the Istanbul NPSA Study Group founded the “Circle of Affective Neuroscience (CAN),” which will undertake national and international projects utilizing the Affective Neuroscience Personality Scale (ANPS; Davis, Panksepp, & Normansell, 2003). CAN will be supervised by Jaak Panksepp and Kenneth Davis. CAN is in contact with several ANPS researchers from both Eastern and Western countries and looks forward to functioning as an interactive portal for the growth of the global ANPS research family. With our announcement in this international bulletin, CAN makes a call for the “Initiation of Cross-cultural Affective Neuroscience (ICAN).” ICAN aims to integrate social psychology, cross-cultural neuroscience, and neuropsychoanalysis.
3. In March 2012, the child psychiatrist Lisa Ouss from Paris Necker Hospital and Paris University gave a conference in İstanbul entitled: “The Neuropsychoanalysis of Hysteria and Conversion Disorders.” The conference was organized by the Istanbul NPSA Study Group, the Doku Counselling Center, and the Clinical Psychology Program of İstanbul Bilgi University. In her highly appreciated talk, Ouss described the psychic and neurological mechanisms underlying hysteria and conversions and discussed neuropsychoanalytic paradigms that may inspire new fMRI studies.

Developing intercity collaboration to spread the spirit of neuropsychoanalysis from Istanbul to other cities in Turkey, and developing international collaboration to enhance ANPS research, will be our priorities starting from 2012.

REFERENCE

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Neuropsychoanalysis Group Mexico City

The Neuropsychoanalysis Group in Mexico City is happy to report the initiation of a research project by its three members, focusing on borderline pathology and the use of benzodiazepines. This study began in August of 2011 and has focused on the clinical problems addressed in the psychoanalytic treatment of this population, particularly the splitting of the transference. There is evidence that many patients do benefit from medication and that a psychoanalytic treatment can be held with the help of benzodiazepines. However, there is concern about the ease with which this sort of medication tends to be prescribed to the borderline population, due to the frequent referred symptom of vague anxiety. In addition, clinical case studies demonstrate that benzodiazepine can become an object to the patient, either of dependence or of rejection to dependence. Our findings so far suggest that the handling of a borderline patient medicated with benzodiazepines demands a neuropsychoanalytic understanding of the case and possibly of neuropsychoanalytic modifications to its technique.

The Universidad Intercontinental in Mexico City is also happy to announce the opening of a neuropsychoanalysis research department for its doctoral program in psychoanalysis, which began in January 2012. The objective is to facilitate the development of a neuropsychoanalytic understanding of clinical phenomena, supported by research conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery. The University began supporting Daniela Flores Mosri's neuropsychoanalytic research in 2010 and continues to be committed to contributing to a more interdisciplinary awareness of psychoanalysis in Mexico.

Daniela Flores Mosri presented a paper on adolescence and initial exposure to alcohol and cannabis, of great relevance to the particular vulnerability of Mexican adolescents to developing borderline organizations due to Mexico's current socio-cultural context for the middle class. The discussion focused on the reliance of alcohol and cannabis to deal with the pain derived from narcissistic injuries, which can only be treated, but not absolutely cured. This problem therefore requires neuropsychoanalytic perspectives to improve the treatment of this population.

Jesús Baca Plasencia continues his ongoing research on neuropsychoanalysis at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, where he is working on a joint study with the Faculty of Biology and Philosophy. The research focuses on the genesis of the ego, correlating the neurobiological account with Freud's metapsychological perspective on the formation of the ego as a development that derives from the body. The project has most recently integrated Antonio Damasio's ideas about the protoself and Mark Solms' concepts of the conscious id. This study will continue to be part of our group's agenda for 2012.

Maria Isabel Rodríguez Luna continues to develop an interdisciplinary model for her private clinical practice, with a main interest in neuropsychoanalytic research, integrating psychiatric, neurologic, and psychoanalytic approaches in the child and adolescent clinic in the field of attachment disorders such as ADHD, bullying, and eating disorders. For these kinds of disorders, neurofeedback techniques are in-