



Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry

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CIRCULAR LETTER #605
PRE-MEETING SPRING
MARCH 2008

GAP and Neuroscience: The Future is Now

Neuroscience will be a highlight at our spring meeting. Bernard Beitman, Professor and Former Chairman of Psychiatry at the University of Missouri, will give the plenary address, "What Psychiatrists Need to Know about the Brain." Dr. Beitman is the lead author of Integrating Psychotherapy and Pharmacotherapy: Dissolving the Mind-Brain Barrier¹ as well as numerous other articles on this topic. He will also be meeting with the task force/committee on Neuroscience as a consultant.



If the Board of Directors approves, our April meeting will also see the launch of a new committee on Neuroscience. The committee is the outgrowth of a task force that has been meeting for the past year, led by Devra Braun. Responses to my on-line polling of the Board of Directors as well as the Steering Committee about the formation of this new committee were overwhelmingly positive. Why does such a committee make sense for GAP?

It makes perfect sense in light of GAP's history and traditions. GAP's focus has never been on presenting the latest research findings to the profession or to the public. Rather, it has been on reviewing and analyzing already published data in various fields relevant to psychiatry and developing publications that interpret these data. When necessary, GAP committees have brought in outside expertise to help them think in new ways about problems. In doing so, we have often looked beyond the walls of our academic psychiatry departments, our private offices, and our mental health organizations and institutions. We have focused on such topics as societal trends, normal and psychopathological development, assessment and classification of disorders, biological, psychological and social treatments, service delivery, teaching and public policy. Many of the developments that have vastly impacted patient care and the practice of psychiatry have occurred outside of our usual venues. Neuroscience is simply another example of these developments. Much of ground-breaking neuroscience research has taken place in laboratories at places such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, or NIMH, neither of which has a medical school.

I think the strong enthusiasm for this new committee stems from the recognition that developments in neuroscience have enormous implications for patient care and public policy, and that there is a need for GAP to be engaged in articulating these implications. For example, we are all excited by the findings of brain imaging research. But what is the appropriate use of brain imaging in clinical psychiatry?

As I write this I am reading the Ethics Column in the most recent newsletter of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP). Barbara Hale-Richlen, M. D., who is completing her residency in child and adolescent psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin, describes her experience interviewing for a job with a private practice in which the interviewer describes his plans to "capture the market on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder" by subjecting children to SPECT scans to "prove" the diagnosis. Dr. Hale-Richlen goes on to raise questions about the ethics of

claiming to be able to diagnose a disorder by a SPECT scan as well as of charging patients \$3500 to do so. When I chaired the APA Council on Children, Adolescents and Their Families, we responded to similar concerns raised by an APA member by developing what we hoped would become an APA position statement on this topic (it became a “resource document,” a less forceful pronouncement than a position statement). We had no neuroscientists on the Council, so one might reasonably ask (and some did) what business we had producing this document. Our business was concern about the impact of performing a procedure on children whose safety and efficacy were inadequately substantiated, and whose use seemed to be growing. We reviewed all the literature we could find, summarized it, and sent the document to experts in the field to review. We made revisions based on the feedback we got, presented it to the Joint Reference Commission, and eventually got it approved and published.²

The Council did what we could, working within the APA structure, to bring our concerns before the field. Some of us were disappointed that our final product did not become a position paper. The APA, for all its strength in numbers and resources, is also limited by its need to avoid taking positions that may alienate its members (and lead to resignations). GAP is much less constrained. The reports of its committees are subject to review by the Publications Board, and eventually, the President, but the review process is mainly concerned with quality issues (such as whether the conclusions of the report are substantiated by the evidence presented). The result is that GAP committees, in contrast to components of larger organizations, have much more freedom to take strong advocacy positions. The downside, of course, is that they don’t automatically have a venue that will publicize their positions. But, to the extent that they get published in widely read journals, they will have an impact.

Our plenary speaker at the spring 2007 was Frances Champagne, who spoke on “Epigenetic Programming of Gene Expression and Behavior.” She demonstrated evidence from a rodent model that the environmental experiences of infancy can alter gene expression and thus behavior through epigenetic modification of steroid genes. The idea that the quality of mothering is important to development does not come as a surprise. What excites us is the identification of links between brain function and developmental psychology and clinical experience. It is the implications of the research that intrigue us, and it is these implications that are important for public policy, teaching, and practice. It is in identifying and articulating these implications, and making recommendations about how the field should respond to them that GAP can play a leading role. It seems to me that this is what advancing psychiatry is really all about.

¹ Beitman BD, Blinder B, Thase M, Riba M, Safer DL: Integrating Psychotherapy and Pharmacotherapy: Dissolving the Mind-Brain Barrier. New York : W. W. Norton, 2003.

² APA Council on Children, Adolescents, and Their Families, The Clinical Use of SPECT Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography, Psychiatric Research Report, Spring 2005, American Psychiatric Association.

Lois T. Flaherty, M.D.



President

**SPRING 2008 MEETING
123rd MEETING OF
GROUP FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PSYCHIATRY**

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2008

10:00 a.m.	GAP Office Opens	Masefield A Room
10:00 a.m.	Finance Committee Meeting	Masefield B Room
11:00 a.m.	Contributions Committee	Masefield B Room
12:00 noon	Publications Board	Hutchinson A Room
2:00 p.m.	Board of Directors	Cooper B Room
4:00 p.m.	Fellows Meeting	Cooper A Room
4:00 p.m.	Fellows Selection Committee	Masefield B Room
5:30 p.m.	Reception of the Board of Directors	Room 688
6:30 p.m.	Fellows Dinner	Cooper A Room
7:00 p.m.	Task Force on Neuroscience Presentation by Drs. Beitman and Viamontes	Red Oak Terrace
9:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room Hosted by: Committee on College Student	Irving A and B Rooms

Thursday Committee Meetings

Child	8:00 p.m.	Library Room
College Student	7:00 p.m.	Studio Room
Neuroscience Task Force	2:00 p.m.	John Jay Suite/Room 102
Psychopathology	3:30 p.m.	Gallery Room

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2008

7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Cooper-Greeley Rooms
8:30 a.m.	General Membership Meeting	Cooper-Greeley Rooms
9:30 a.m.	Committee Meetings	
10:30 a.m.	Coffee Break	
12:00 noon	Luncheon	Cooper-Greeley Rooms
	Steering Committee Meeting	Irving A Room
1:00 p.m.	Fellows Meeting	Irving B Room
2:00 p.m.	Committee Meetings	
3:00 p.m.	Coffee Break	
5:00 p.m.	Poster Session and Juice Break	Foyer–Cooper-Greeley Rooms
5:30 p.m.	Plenary Session: What Psychiatrists Need to Know About the Brain Bernard Beitman, M.D.	
6:30 p.m.	Cocktail Reception	Red Oak Terrace
7:30 p.m.	Dinner	Cooper-Greeley Rooms
9:00 p.m.	Hospitality Hosted by: Committee on Disabilities	Foyer - Cooper-Greeley Rooms

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2008

7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Cooper-Greeley Rooms
	Steering Committee Meeting	Irving B Room
	Fellows Breakfast Meeting	Irving A Room
9:00 a.m.	Committee Meetings	
11:30 a.m.	Luncheon	Cooper-Greeley Rooms
12:00 noon	Board of Directors Wrap Up Meeting	Cooper B Room

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

ADOLESCENCE	ROOM 688
AGING	MASEFIELD B ROOM
ADDICTIONS	VANDERBILT SUITE/ROOM 107
CHILD PSYCHIATRY	LIBRARY ROOM
COLLEGE STUDENT	STUDIO ROOM
CULTURAL PSYCHIATRY	PORTICO ROOM
DISABILITIES	LYNDHURST SUITE/ROOM 104
DISASTERS AND TERRORISM	ROOM 217
FAMILY	HUTCHINSON B ROOM
GENDER ISSUES AND MENTAL HEALTH	HUTCHINSON A ROOM
HUMAN SEXUALITY	ROOM 207
IMG	JOHN CARRERE SUITE/ROOM 101
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	VERANDA ROOM
LGBT	ZENGER ROOM
MEDICAL EDUCATION	PARLOR ROOM
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	ROOM 201
PLANNING, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS	ROOM 305
PREVENTIVE PSYCHIATRY	ROOM 215
PSYCHIATRY AND THE COMMUNITY	KYKUIT SUITE/ROOM 103
PSYCHIATRY AND THE LAW	SLEEPY HOLLOW/ROOM 105
PSYCHIATRY AND NEUROSCIENCE	JOHN JAY SUITE/ROOM 102
PSYCHIATRY AND RELIGION	ROOM 209
PSYCHOPATHOLOGY	GALLERY ROOM
PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY	ROOM 634
RESEARCH	ROOM 203
SOCIAL ISSUES	ROOM 211
TERRORISM and POLITICAL VIOLENCE	ROOM 221
THERAPEUTIC CARE	ROOM 219
PSYCHOTHERAPY	ROOM 223
WORK AND ORGANIZATIONS	VAN CORTLANDT/ROOM 106

Announcements.

The Task Force on Psychiatry and Neuroscience has exciting news.

Drs. Bernard Breitman and George Viamontes will attend the April meeting – Dr. Beitman as plenary speaker and consultant to the Task Force and Dr. Viamontes as guest. Among their numerous recent publications, they coedited the April 2006 and 2007 issues of *Psychiatric Annals*, on the subjects of, “The Neurobiology of Psychotherapy” (2006), and “The Neurobiology of the Unconscious” (2007).

We plan to work with Dr. Beitman to write a brief paper on his plenary subject – Why Psychiatrists Should Learn About the Brain, and What they Need to Know.” We are also in the final stages of editing a brief opinion piece on "Biological Psychiatry: Past, Present, and Future."

The Task Force is soon likely to become an actual committee. We would welcome suggestions of appropriate colleagues who have some expertise in neuroscience and may be interested in joining the committee and GAP.

In the meantime, GAP members who would like to join Dr. Beitman and the Task Force without any conflict with their regular committee activities, can contact Devra Braun (at DevraB@aol.com, or (203) 622-2394) and join us on Thursday evening from 7:00 - 9:30 pm.

Why and What Psychiatrists Should Know about the Brain:

Dr. Bernard Beitman, our plenary speaker, will be leading a teaching discussion on Thursday evening, April 10th on the subject of why and what psychiatrists should know about the brain. We plan a dinner meeting from 7:00 pm through 9:30 or 10 pm in a room at the Renaissance Hotel Red Oak Terrace.

Using animated slides, Dr. Beitman will explore basic neuroanatomy that has specific relevance to the mind-brain phenomena underlying psychotherapy. Dr. Beitman has written and lectured extensively on the topic of the neurobiology of the unconscious and of psychotherapy. He is Professor and Former Chair of the University of Missouri Department of Psychiatry.

RSVP to Dr. Devra Braun ASAP to assure seating availability by March 31st.

Email: DevraB@aol.com; phone 203-622-2394



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DATES OF FUTURE GAP MEETINGS

2008
April 10-12
November 13-15

2009
April 16-18
November 12-14

2010
April 15-17
November 11-13

2011
April 7-9
November 10-12

2012
March 29-31
November 15-17

2013
April 4-6
November 14-16

2014
April 10-12
November 13-15

2015
April 16-18
November 12-14