

# SIG Newsletter 2023

## Introduction, Dr Trudi Seneviratne, Registrar

Once again, I am delighted to share in this newsletter, the wonderful, interesting work of our Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The College has 15 Special Interest Groups which provide a forum for members to come together in a particular area of psychiatry. This newsletter updates you on the variety and richness of the work within the SIGs.

Our SIGs lead on specialist topics within psychiatry and mental health, and include aspects of diversity, marginalised groups, creativity, history, philosophy, culture, spirituality, and new technologies. Each Special Interest Group has a Chair, a Finance Officer, and an informal Executive Committee.

They are:

- Adolescent forensic psychiatry
- Arts psychiatry
- Digital psychiatry
- Evolutionary psychiatry
- History of psychiatry
- Neurodevelopmental psychiatry
- Occupational psychiatry
- Philosophy and psychiatry
- Private and independent practice
- Rainbow (LGBTQ+)
- Spirituality and psychiatry
- Sport and exercise and psychiatry
- Transcultural psychiatry
- Women and mental health
- Volunteering and international psychiatry



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Dr Trudi  
Seneviratne,  
Registrar

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SIGs are created where there are particular areas of psychiatry that our members want to focus on. And of course, as an exciting discipline, there are many new areas of psychiatry that emerge with time.

Whilst we have a capacity for 15 groups at any one time, this does not prevent members from coming together more informally to discuss other areas of interest and using College facilities to meet. Please do contact us, should you wish to do this.

You will see that the SIGs have been very active with numerous conferences, activities and another exhibition this year. I am grateful to all our SIGs for taking forward important aspects of psychiatry and encourage you to [become members](#) of as many as you want.

With warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Trudi".

Dr Trudi Seneviratne  
Registrar

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Dr Trudi Seneviratne, Registrar, along with representatives from each of the College’s fifteen Special Interest Groups (SIGs) at the Annual SIG Chairs Day, November 2023

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## Adolescent Forensic Special Interest Group

We have around 3,700 members and have been running for 11 years. The Adolescent Forensic Psychiatry SIG was set up to support professionals and organisations to work more effectively with young people in conflict with the law. Such young people often present multiple comorbid psychiatric and psychosocial difficulties alongside high risks to themselves and others in the community, hospital and secure settings. The SIG also has a broader role in supporting medico-legal work involving children and adolescents including in family law and Court of Protection.

I would like to recognise the very significant contribution of Gill Bell, who in 2023 stepped down from the role of Chair of the SIG. Her leadership and experience have been of huge benefit to the SIG and have been much appreciated.



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Dr Richard Church,  
Interim SIG Chair

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Peter Misch, a founding member of the SIG, kindly took on the role of Interim Chair from 01/03/2023 until 29/08/2023 when I (Richard Church) then volunteered to step in as Interim Chair.

Throughout this time of change, the SIG has benefitted from the steady support of Gabrielle Pendlebury in the role of Finance Officer, and from ongoing support from members of the Executive Committee.

There have been some minor changes in the Executive Committee, with Ollie White stepping down after many years of service to the SIG, and Heidi Hales moving to the vacated role of Forensic Faculty liaison.

One of the main objectives for 2023, and a key task I took on as Interim Chair at short notice, was to deliver the annual conference. I'm pleased to report that this was done successfully with talks from EFCAP (European Association for Forensic Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychology and other Professions) colleagues in Netherlands, the National Crime Agency, and a legal perspective from Benjamin Aina KC. There was very positive feedback and some useful pointers for future events.

**Dr Richard Church, Adolescent Forensic Psychiatry SIG Chair**

## Arts and Psychiatry Special Interest Group



Dr Hannah Ali,  
Chair

We have around 3,600 members and have been running for 8 years. The Arts and Psychiatry SIG was set up to provide a forum for collaboration and exchange of ideas, increase understanding of arts therapies and art as therapy and promote the authentic portrayal of mental states.

In 2023, we continued to focus on previous objectives - promoting art in training, public and treatment; expanding the membership and promoting our events to members. In addition, we worked closely with the Exhibitions Group, re-recruited a service user rep and assisted in creating and appointing a role for an Artist-in-Residence at the college.

Although very popular and lucrative, we had to stop our monthly lunchtime arts workshops that we had been running previous years due to limits on numbers of events we could have. We had previously received over 80 submissions from artists for this which were shortlisted by myself and our service user rep. We had planned to contact some of those shortlisted but unsuccessful applicants for further workshops this year or for 2024. We hope we may be able to go ahead with this in the future.

We finally held our (delayed by covid) annual conference on poetry in May 2023 which was well received and had excellent feedback. We had a range of interesting speakers, from Professor Paul Crawford and James Whitehead, Avi Mendelson who spoke about his PHD on 'Shakespeare and Madness', to workshops by Wendy French and the charity PoetsIn. (Speaker info can be found [here](#).)

In July, we attended Congress in Liverpool and held a panel talk on literature in psychiatry, alongside Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyebode and Horatio Clare.



Femi speaking ahead of a talk on the works of Alasdair Gray.



We have continued to sit on the Exhibition Group, formed in 2022. We have supported an exhibition of the Insight covers, and are due to launch a BJPsych covers exhibition in January 2024, with launch event on 25<sup>th</sup>. We continue to liaise with Marija Stojanovic to consider “The Womb” exhibition for 2025-6, as well as other potential exhibitions with the committee.



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*From “[The Womb](#),”  
Marija Stojanovic*

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In addition, to the above we have also consulted with artists on projects and generated ideas for collaboration in the future.

In October, we held interviews for our service user rep role, and re-recruited Daniel Regan, an influential arts and health artist, who had previously been on the committee for 3-4 years and vastly contributed to our work and connected us to the [Arts and Health Hub](#).



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ArtSIG Christmas meal – Dr Rachel Proctor, Dr Hannah Ali, Dr Arabo Shahenian, Dr Alan Baban and Dr Shirin Pezeshgi

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In November, we recruited our first ever Artist-in-Residence for the college, [Adam Hines-Green](#), and took the opportunity to expand our committee by inviting unsuccessful candidates with a clear passion for arts and health to join the ArtSIG committee.



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1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place entries from the previous “I am Here” members competition, ‘Isolation’ by Ben Chetcuti & ‘Breaking Point’ Amit Sharma. The winning entry appeared on a BJPsych front cover.

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I will be stepping down as Chair later in the year, as well as Arabo, our Finance Officer, but continue to remain dedicated to the ArtSIG committee. We look forward to welcoming and working with the new Chair and Finance Officer in the coming months.

**Dr Hannah Ali, Arts and Psychiatry SIG Chair**

## Digital Psychiatry Special Interest Group

As the newest and smallest SIG (founded four years ago), we are delighted to have increased our membership by 44% in the last year, and now have over 1,500 members.

The Digital Psychiatry SIG was founded to promote and raise awareness of digital technology and innovation in mental health. The Digital SIG achieves this aim through the engagement of members, the hosting of educational events, production of newsletters and podcasts and contributing to the wider national digital conversation. We have a varied and committed executive team with specialist defined areas of interest and expertise.

The previous co-chairs (Romy and David) stepped-down this year and handed over to interim co-chairs Iain and Faith.



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(L-R) Founding Co-Chairs, Dr Romyne Gadelrab and Dr Dave Rigby, and current Interim Co-Chairs, Dr Faith Ndebele and Dr Iain Grant

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Our objectives for 2023 were:

- 1) Continue to build our Digital SIG communities- and engage the RCPsych Membership including those overseas. There are over 20,000 members and so we would like to see more of them join DPSIG.
- 2) Launch Digital SIG podcast series (in final stages of planning)
- 3) Host face to face annual conference and some smaller events that engage the wider community
- 4) To fund a bursary/prize for our members in digital innovation
- 5) Service user led blog for the website

- 6) Further edition of 'Digital In Mind' newsletter
- 7) Continue to contribute to important work taking part in the area of digital psychiatry.

We have achieved these objectives by:

- 1) Growing the membership by 44%. Becoming one of the fastest-growing social media SIGs.
- 2) We launched a well-received Digital SIG podcast series for our members to listen to at their convenience.
- 3) We organised and hosted an informative webinar on AI in Psychiatry
- 4) We hosted a successful face-to-face conference at the College, focussing on some key and important developments in the practice of Psychiatry in the digital age.
- 5) The SIG was able to generate profit from a successful conference, although this year we had not reached a surplus to safely provide bursaries and financial awards; we have been able to progress with digital mental health competitions and articles for our wider membership.
- 6) We have benefitted from active service user representation as part of the executive committee.
- 7) Further edition of 'Digital In Mind' newsletter
- 8) The DPSIG developed the RCPsych Digital Mental Health team of the year award to raise the profile of digital transformation and clinicians within RCPsych and the psychiatric workforce. The first RCPsych digital mental health team of the year award was given in November 2023.
- 9) Members of the SIG executive have contributed to some important national projects including the development of a digital and data literacy framework, promoting the clinically-safe application of software in mental health and contributing to the digital chapter of the Management in Psychiatry publications. The executive committee have provided expert opinion and comment to the college and press regarding the potential and challenges of digital advances, particularly in AI and standardisation.

**Dr Faith Ndebele and Dr Iain Grant, Interim Digital Psychiatry SIG Co-Chairs**



## Evolutionary Psychiatry Special Interest Group

We have been running for 8 years and currently have over 2,800 members. The Evolutionary Psychiatry SIG was set up to promote evolutionary thinking in psychiatry.

The aims of the EPSIG are:

1. Raise awareness of the value of understanding the contribution of evolutionary theory to psychiatry
2. Encourage research into the evolutionary psychiatry
3. Provide a forum for psychiatrists and others to discuss evolutionary models, research ideas and data with fellow evolutionists
4. Facilitate networking with academic institutions and evolutionary scientists, biologists, psychotherapists, psychologists and other disciplines such as philosophy
5. Keep members and supporters of the SIG informed via our webpage and newsletter
6. Organise workshops, symposia and conferences on evolutionary psychiatry and related subjects
7. Organise sessions at the WPA and the College's International Congress, as well as with Faculties and Devolved Nations and Divisions.



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Dr Paul St John  
Smith, EPSIG Chair

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We publish regular newsletters, which can be viewed on the SIG webpages: [Evolutionary psychiatry newsletters | Royal College of Psychiatrists \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/evolutionary-psychiatry-newsletters)

In 2023 we hosted a successful trainee event, a conference with CALC, and a lunchtime webinar with a fascinating talk by Dr Derek Tracy.

**Dr Paul St John Smith, Evolutionary Psychiatry SIG Chair**

## History of Psychiatry Special Interest Group

We are pleased to have increased our membership by 13% since 2022, ending the year with over 3,600 members.

The History of Psychiatry SIG was set up nine years ago to encourage clinicians to research the history of psychiatry; to improve our understanding of the subject and its value, including relating to current policy and practice; and to provide a forum for discussion.

I would like to thank all members of HoPSIG Exec for their enthusiasm and commitment over the past year. Particular thanks to Catriona Grant, SIG Manager, Peter Carpenter, Finance Officer and Nicol Ferrier, Newsletter Editor and Marius Turda.

I would also like to commend Claire Hilton, whose has now completed her term as our first Historian in Residence and who has made such a contribution in establishing the role.

I am very pleased that Gordon Bates has been appointed as our next HiR and that Claire will be our next Honorary Archivist.

In furtherance of its objectives the SIG continued to work collaboratively with the Historian in Residence, Hon. Archivist, Archivist and Librarian.

We met our 2023 objectives, as outlined below:

1. Continue Covid Archive collection – digital and physical. Review of collected items with Archivist. - HoPSIG contributed a response to the RCPsych Call for Evidence for the UK Covid-19 Inquiry
2. Develop and strengthen existing links with academic departments and other institutions outside the College involved in History of Medicine/Psychiatry. - We continue to have active links with British Society for History of Medicine and Royal Society of Medicine, and British Psychological Society and Oxford Brookes University. In 2023 we initiated collaboration with Manchester Medical Society and academic historians at the Universities of York, Glasgow, Liverpool and Warwick.
3. Our proposed session for IC2023 - '*The Uncanny Rise of British Medical Hypnotism and Early Talking Therapies (1888-1900)*' has



Dr Graham Ash,  
HoPSIG Chair

been re-positioned as a joint half-day event with the Section for Medical Hypnotism at the RSM which we expect to go ahead in Spring 2024.

4. Hold an event on 'Repositioning reputations' in 2023. – This topic was covered in a Panel Discussion/Q&A at the F2F event on 9 January 2023.
5. Exhibition: "*We Are Not Alone*" *Legacies of Eugenics*. We will work with Prof. Marius Turda and the Library and Archives Team to record the impact of this exhibition.

- Please see ["We Are Not Alone": Legacies of Eugenics New Exhibition at 21 Prescot Street](#) by Fiona Watson, Library and Archive Manager, pp.14-16 in HoPSIG Newsletter Autumn 2022 and ['Review and Reflections of the Exhibition "We Are Not Alone": Legacies of Eugenics. \(22 September 2022 – 24 February 2023\) Royal College of Psychiatrists'](#) by John Mason, pp. 21-31 in HoPSIG Newsletter Spring 2023. The exhibition also received an [independent review](#) in the Lancet in February 2023.

6. Involving med students & trainees in HoPSIG. Hold a further archives-related event in late 2023. – We held our Second [HoPSIG Autumn Conference at the London Metropolitan Archives](#) on 20 October 2023. This was a full day F2F event attended by 26 delegates. Sessions focused on histories of therapies and psychiatric identity (see link) and a workshop on engaging with asylum documentation (see photos below).



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Attendees at the HoPSIG conference at the London Metropolitan Archives

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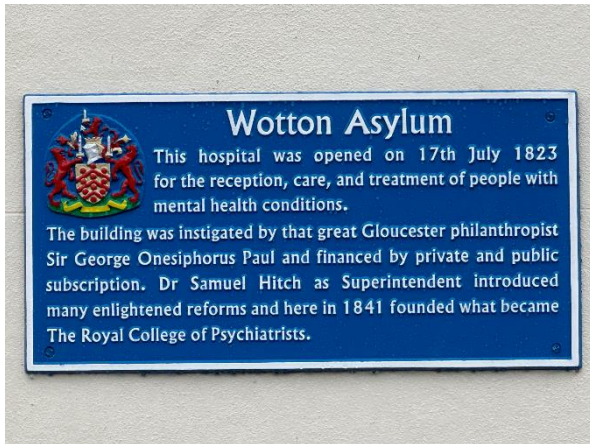
7. Involving med students & trainees in HoPSIG. Pursue trainee-lead project to engage med students and trainees in historical activity.

We have six trainees who are active members of HoPSIG exec. We responded to a call from Higher trainees at HEIWales and GA gave an online presentation, ['Would it help psychiatrists to know more about the History of Psychiatry?'](#) to the HEIW higher psychiatry trainee day on 22/11/23 with Susan Adams and Penny Hallas from 'A Private Land' project at the former Talgarth Hospital, Brecon.

8. Produce eNewsletter and Twitter feed. Our Editorial team lead by Nicol Ferrier produced two very high-quality editions of HoPSIG newsletter [Spring 2023](#) and [Autumn 2023](#). We maintained a significant presence on X, formerly Twitter with 1.4 K followers. In addition, members of HoPSIG contributed articles to College blog publications.
9. Event on Psychiatrists and the Media (Gavin Miller, Glasgow Uni, joint with PhilSIG). We held a Teams Meeting in September to discuss writing a proposal for an exhibition on this theme. The proposal has been accepted by the Exhibition Group and we will write a related article to submit to BJP Bulletin.
10. Hold in-person conference in Newcastle on "Understanding death and mortality in the context of mental illness and institutionalisation during the 18th-20th centuries" late 2022/2023 (HoPSIG/Newcastle University). We will review the potential to hold this event in a different format in 2023 – We have decided not to pursue this event further.
11. Witness Seminar on "Enthusiasm and change: The development of the culture of academia in 1970's psychiatry" about UK academic psychiatry in the 1970's in 2023. We will hold a meeting to plan a way forward to record oral histories in this important area. – We have been unable to progress this event.
12. We will contribute to a conference session with BPS Challenging Histories Group on 'Challenging Histories' at the European Congress of Psychology in Brighton in July 2023. - This session was not accepted for the final programme for the event.

In addition, in July 2023 - Peter Carpenter, our Finance Officer, participated in a ceremony to unveil a Blue Plaque at the main building of the former Wotton Asylum in Gloucester.

Dr Samuel Hitch convened a meeting here on 27 July 1841 at which was founded the Association which in 1971, after several changes of name, became our College.



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The new blue plaque at the former Wooton Asylum in Gloucester

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**Dr Graham Ash, History of Psychiatry SIG Chair**



## Neurodevelopmental Psychiatry Special Interest Group

We have about 3,600 members and have been running for 6 years. The NDPSIG was set up to provide a group within the College for neurodevelopmental issues that cross faculty and/or divisional boundaries. We also had the following objectives:

- Promote a wider discussion and understanding of neurodevelopmental disorder across the whole field of psychiatry
- Support clinical & academic development in this field
- Enable a coordinated approach to policy on neurodevelopmental disorders at college and national level.
- Facilitate better links with other organisations in this field
- Provide a focal contact point for external partners in relation to neurodevelopmental issues that cross faculty and/or divisional boundaries
- Support education on neurodevelopmental topics in faculties, divisions and CALC.
- To contribute to the training and continuing professional development of medical students, trainees and members of the College through workshops, academic sessions, written articles and a variety of educational means.

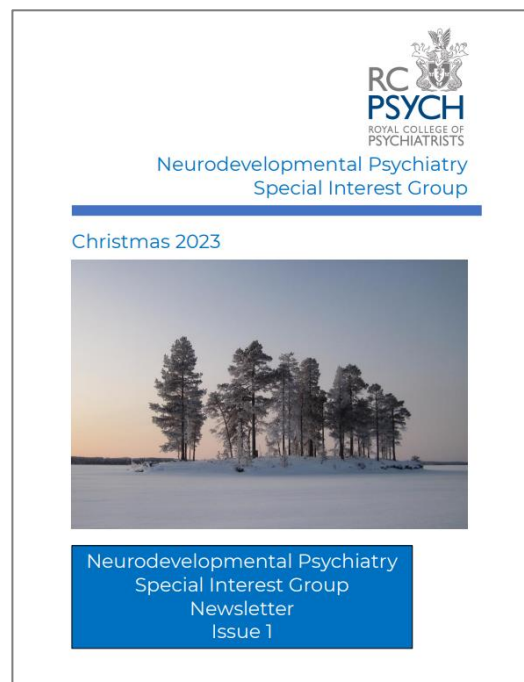


Dr Peter  
Carpenter,  
NDPSIG Chair

Our objectives for the 2023 have been:

- 1) To support the development by the College of a National Autism Training Programme for psychiatrists – this has occurred with members of the SIG supporting the editor extensively and it is hoped that the associated e-learning will be completed by the end of January.
- 2) To develop credentialling in Neurodevelopmental Psychiatry. This work has started and it is hoped will be better developed in 2024.

- 3) To campaign to develop into a Faculty – this depends in part on the development of higher training in NDPs so is for 2024-5.
- 4) To develop a national Community of practice for clinicians working in autism – this has borne fruit and is very active, funded by NHSE/HEE and operated by a group in Kings College/Institute of Psychiatry.
- 5) To develop the position of an ADHD Champion. The JD is now being approved and it is hoped will be advertised in the new year.
- 6) To develop a College Position Statement on Autism. This is moving through the college system rather clunkily, but it is hoped to have a final statement approved next year.
- 7) To develop a College Position statement on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – in the process of being written – hope to get final report approval in 2024.
- 8) To support development of an Autism Senate – awaiting events outside of college.
- 9) To develop IT communications with our members - now being actively discussed and planned and hope to develop active systems next year.
- 10) To launch a newsletter for the first time – first newsletter sent out 20 December!
- 11) To continue to generate surpluses in finance for the College to use. Believe has occurred this year but await final accounts.



Issue 1 of the newsletter

**Dr Peter Carpenter, Neurodevelopmental Psychiatry SIG Chair**

## Occupational Psychiatry Special Interest Group

The OPSIG ended the year with over 2,600 members. The SIG's vision is for the importance of work to be embedded in routine clinical care, by promoting wide recognition of the positive benefits of good work, within a speciality where obtaining, or returning to, work is seen as meaningful treatment outcome. We deliver this by engagement with both generalist adult and specialist occupational psychiatrists, through a programme of events, policy development and collaboration across sectors – with unique links to the Faculty and Society of Occupational Medicine, the UK Armed Forces, as well as wider independent, industrial and corporate sectors.



Dr Darren  
Minshall, OPSIG  
Chair

2023 has been an opportunity for the OPSIG to reaffirm its position and relevance to the membership, seeking to grow numbers, and deliver two high quality events, as well as the inaugural Occupational Psychiatry Poster Prize for trainees – ratified by Education & Training Committee in February 23.

Overall, the year was a success. A strong Webinar not only began the year well in January but delivered a financial gain to subsidise the summer event in July, held face-to-face in Prescott Street, with the opportunity for networking over drinks and canapes.

We were informed at the annual SIG Chairs meeting that the OPSIG has grown by 13% which reflects this effort. We are proud to have members from Occupational Health and Occupational Medicine and hold strong links to both the Faculty and Society of Occupational Medicine as well as the UK Armed Forces.

In 2024 we seek to grow our events and fill our capacity for time and attendees within the SIG management framework. Once we achieve this milestone we will plan to increase in scale, initially with an annual conference perhaps, potentially in 2025 or 2026. We have switched our rhythm with face-to-face earlier in the year and deconflicted with Congress as we were only working days apart this year.

We will continue the trainee poster prize, but expanding the scope, so a trainee may choose either an anonymised real case or now a fictional one, to inform the occupationally relevant literature review.

We will also continue to engage with College policy and communication teams on matters relating to occupational psychiatry, and work and health more broadly.

In addition the OPSIG aims to maximise our exposure in literature and print through the stable of RCPsych publications. We aim to highlight the key interaction between work and health, champion good work being considered a treatment outcome for clinicians, and support organisations to deliver evidence based workplace mental health interventions.

**Dr Darren Minshall, Occupational Psychiatry SIG Chair**

## Philosophy Special Interest Group

We have 6,392 members and have been running for over 25 years.

The Philosophy SIG was set up to develop the dialogue between philosophers and psychiatrists in the belief that such dialogue would be mutually rewarding, both in conceptual and clinical terms.

2023 was a year where we hoped as the Philosophy SIG to further increase engagement with our members, through the already opened channels of communications such as the formation of online reading groups, but also the organisation of events. The results were mixed in this sense. Our Interdisciplinary workshop on psychopathology saw the participation of clinicians, researchers and philosophers in the field and was quite successful receiving positive feedback from attendees.



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Dr Anastasios  
Dimopoulos,  
Philosophy SIG Chair

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The Philosophy SIG workshop held at the RCPsych in London in April 2023

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As the Philosophy SIG we assisted in the organisation of the Steve Pearce study day; responsibility without blame, organised on 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 by members of the Medical Psychotherapy faculty.

The annual conference, scheduled for November 2023, had as its main theme co-creation. Unfortunately, we had to cancel it, since it did not attract enough interest and not enough people registered for it.

An online reading and film discussion group took place monthly for the most part of the year. It will continue its activities in 2024.

Dr Hasanen Al-Taiar is stepping down from his role as Finance Officer in 2023.

We will continue to pursue ways to engage our members in the year ahead. The online reading and film discussion group will continue this year. One project under consideration is the development of an introductory module on philosophy and psychiatry for the e-learning platform.

**Dr Anastasios Dimopoulos, Philosophy SIG Chair**

## Private and Independent Practice Special Interest Group

We have 5498 members and have been running since the 1990s. The PIPSIG was set up to support and advocate for the needs of those members working outside the NHS in any capacity.



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Dr Mona Freeman,  
PIPSIG Chair

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Members of the PIPSIG exec committee at  
a meeting at the College.

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This was my first year as Chair. We firstly agreed a strategy for PIPSIG at our spring away day. This was presented to Council in the October meeting and received a positive response. PIPSIG would like to raise the profile of those college members working outside the NHS within all RCPsych structures and work more collaboratively.

We also held two conferences (one remote and one in person) which were both successful and profitable. We continued to hold monthly online drop ins for up to 30 PIPSIG members which continue to be usually oversubscribed.

In 2024 we aim to forge more links within College structures. We would like to have each faculty and division coopt an independent member onto their Execs and we shall invite those members into an expanded PIPSIG Exec. We shall still offer monthly drop ins and a summer and winter conference for PIPSIG members. We will also welcome a trainee rep when one is identified.

**Dr Mona Freeman, Private and Independent Practice SIG Chair**

## Rainbow LGBTQ+ Special Interest Group

The sexuality and gender diversity special interest group.

In February 2001 a Special Interest Group in Gay and Lesbian Mental Health was established in the College to promote discussion and research, provide expertise within the College and contribute to education. The group subsequently extended its remit to include Gender diversity and mental health.

We have over 1,900 members as of December 2023. The group's current aims are:

- promote and research the mental health of LGBTQ+ people
- promote training for all mental health professionals regarding the mental health of LGBTQ+ people
- support and advocate for LGBTQ+ mental health professionals
- advise on local and national policy relating to LGBTQ+ mental health

The group is open to anyone and everyone who has an interest in LGBTQ+ matters.

We have undertaken the following activities in 2023:

1. We have continued to work with the College EDI Manager and equity and equality leads on taking forward the 12 commitments identified from the LGBTQ+ psychiatrists survey
2. We have launched the first Rainbow SIG Prof Michael King Essay prize competition
3. Members from the executive committee have chaired and attended sessions with the aim of representing LGBTQ+ mental health matters at meetings organised by various college and external groups. These included:
  - Dr Pavan Joshi delivered a session on LGBTQ+ mental health at the RCPsych Trent Division Medical Students and Foundation Year Conference
  - “Celebrating Rainbow/LGBTQ+ families in psychiatry” – chaired by Dr Josep Villanova with sessions by Dr Maire Cooney and Dr Alan Mackenzie



Dr Pavan Joshi,  
Rainbow SIG  
Chair

- Dr Elinor Hynes contributed to the [RCPsych Insight magazine](#) Spring edition “First, do not harm” article regarding transgender healthcare, on page 12
  - Exec chair Dr Pavan Joshi chaired session “On being me” at the College’s International Congress in Liverpool
  - Participated in the “creating inclusive LGBTQ+ environments” session at College’s International Congress in Liverpool
  - Exec member Prof Helen Killaspy chaired a webinar for RCPsych Trent and West Midlands Division on LGBTQ+ mental health. Exec member Dr Josep Villanova was a speaker at the event.
  - Interview with Dr Cass – Financial Officer Dr Elinor Hynes moderated a session organised by the Wales Division
4. In 2023 the SIG increased its executive committee including four new executive members
  5. Contributed to RCPsych pride in June 2023
  6. We held four executive committee meetings throughout this year and an Annual Business Meeting (ABM) in July 2023
  7. We had regular meetings with the College’s EDI manager and attended the Annual SIG Chairs’ Day in November.

**Dr Pavan Joshi, Rainbow SIG Chair**

## Spirituality & Psychiatry Special Interest Group

We have 5351 members and have been running for 24 years.

The SPSIG was set up to:

- Provide a safe place within which College members can discuss spirituality, broadly conceived, in relation to their professional practice and vocation. This has happened mainly through its day conferences but also (in the past) a newsletter and publications archive
- Positively influence the wider College in all its affairs, notably policy, publications, curriculum and the annual essay prize
- Engage in debate on spirituality in relation to psychiatry nationally and internationally
- Liaise with and influence national and international bodies with common concerns, notably the WPA



Prof Chris Cook,  
SPSIG Chair

Our 2023 activities:

- The planned day conference at the College was postponed until 2024 due to a train strike
- Delivered our first SIG webinar, with very good feedback
- An away day was held for the exec to review activities and consider future strategy/priorities
- CASC stations on spirituality for MRCPsych exam were prepared, feedback obtained, and these are now nearly ready for submission
- Publication on spirituality and epistemic injustice in BJPsych Advances by two members of our exec committee
- Annual Essay Prize Competition held as planned – four entries
- Exec member roles were kept under review and two new exec members were recruited, including a new trainee rep
- The 2022 SPSIG members survey was published online
- After discussion with the Dean, the planned survey of trainees was not implemented, but a strategy for engagement with training/trainees was developed
- Continued consideration given to planning a workshop for trainees on spirituality and psychiatry
- SPSIG website content maintained

**Professor Christopher C.H. Cook, Spirituality and Psychiatry SIG Chair**



## Sport & Exercise Psychiatry Special Interest Group

We have almost 3,000 members and have been running for six years. The SEPSIG was set up to:

- Raise awareness of mental health problems in sport and to promote best practice in addressing these.
- Promote evidence-based, safe physical activity and exercise interventions throughout mental health services.

In 2023 we hosted a successful SEPSIG14 online conference, on the theme of: *How to influence research and promote fitness interventions for mental health.*

Our second conference, SEPSIG 15, had the theme of: *Neurodiversity in the athlete.* The event was held at the RCPsych in London, an allowed opportunities for networking, alongside a series of fascinating talks.

The trainee support group has expanded under the guidance of Dr Jennifer Keal. We repeated the annual trainee poster prize at our SEPSIG15 conference, and several trainees are looking to perform a quality improvement (QI) project on how they can get more experience working within elite sport setting.



SEPSIG exec members David Prosser (L) and Amit Mistry (R) at the Annual ISEH 5k run in June 2023, Regents Park



Dr Amit Mistry,  
SEPSIG Chair

We are aiming for the accepted trainee poster prizes to be published in the Journal of Sports Psychiatry again.

SEPSIG has increased its @X media presence (RCPsych\_SEPSIG) to over 1,500 followers. This was highlighted at the annual SIG strategy day as an example of how to actively engage with a wider audience and promote the interests and achievements of the SIG.

2023 Highlights from SEPSIG members:

- **Dr Amit D. Mistry** was a guest speaker at an Asics launch event, central London, spoke at the RCPsych South Eastern Division Conference 12/10/2023, 'Eating Disorders, sports, exercise and mental

health', was part of a panel discussion on Exercise & Eating Disorders for the Beat charity remote conference, and presented on Neurodiversity at the National ECB Medical & Science conference. He also released a Podcast on Spotify with the 'thinking mind podcast' (formerly Maudsley learning) on 'Exercise, Eating Disorders and Mental Health in Elite Sport', and awarded Consultant Psychiatrist of the year at Cygnet Health as an inpatient consultant in Eating Disorders. Dr Mistry remains Consultant Psychiatrist to England Cricket Board Womens' team.

- **Dr Caz Nahman** taught at a FA women's football training day for coaches and support staff on REDS and disordered eating, and the ISSP mentorship program, and presented at scientific meetings. She helped develop a sports psychiatry/sport neurology/rehabilitation combined teaching seminar for undergraduate medical students which has won an Oxford University award and an award within the USA to develop an online teaching program for undergraduate medical students in the USA. She sits on the editorial board of the Sports Psychiatry Journal.
- **Dr Tim Rogers** has completed a series of sessions of mental health/eating disorder awareness with the Artistic Team at the English National Ballet. He with Emma Hayes and the team behind the team at Chelsea FC women on mental health awareness and neurodiversity, and with Harlequins men's and women's SEM and backroom teams on mental health awareness and neurodiversity. Dr Rogers also spoke at the National Tennis Centre on perinatal mental health in athletes at their Sports Gynaecology conference, and about the place of Psychiatrists in Professional Sport at the Sporting Chance Summit at St Mary's Stadium.
- **Dr Nicole Lekka** continues to work with the International Association for Dance, Medicine and Science (IADMS): the Mental Health Advisory Group (MHAG) re. dancer mental health, and the Dance for Health (DfH) Committee. She was a reviewer for the Journal of Dance Medicine and Science (JDMS) and contributed to the IADMS International Conference in Oct 2023. Dr Lekka also participated in the Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust's Physical Activity Network and presented the e-poster "Staff's perspectives on physical activity in acute mental health general adult wards: a follow-up" at the 31st European Congress of Psychiatry, Paris March 28, 2023.
- **Dr Thomas McCabe** has authored a chapter entitled 'Navigating Mental Illness and Brain Injury in Amateur Rugby – A Sport Psychiatry Case Study' for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of 'Mental Health and Well-being Interventions in Sport - Research, Theory and Practice' Edited

By [Gavin Breslin](#), [Gerard Leavey](#). He has also co-authored a chapter entitled 'Suicide in Elite Sport' with Dr Paul Gorczynski for the journal, *Advances in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health*. These works will be published within the next year. Dr McCabe was the first author on 'Darkness stopping play? An update on cricket and mental health' which was published in the South African Journal of Sport Medicine.

- **Professor Alan Currie** remains active in his sports psychiatry roles with the IOC mental health working group, the UK Sports Institute mental health expert panel and in his anti-doping roles with UK antidoping (UKAD) and the International Testing Agency (ITA). In 2023 he co-authored book chapters on 'mental health crisis in sport', 'bipolar and psychotic disorders in sport', 'the mental health of young athletes' and 'helping the athlete with depression'. He was a member of the writing team which published the injury and illness surveillance framework for high-performance sports. He is a lecturer on the IOC mental health diploma, and presented at an international football conference (Isokinetics) in London in June where he joined a mental health panel discussion. He delivered a keynote on ADHD at the Rugby Football Union annual conference, was guest speaker at the Dutch Olympic team's annual conference and presented on 'burnout and overtraining' at the English Cricket Board's science and medicine meeting.



Prof Alan Currie and other speakers at the IOC Advanced Team Physician Course, Medellin, Colombia



Prof Alan Currie at the RFU Medicine and Science Conference, Twickenham

## Dr Amit Mistry, Sports and Exercise SIG Chair

## Transcultural Psychiatry Special Interest Group

We currently have over 5,800 members.

The Transcultural psychiatry Special Interest Group includes clinicians near and far who want to improve mental health for people from all cultures across the globe.

As a group we learn and shared the expertise and experiences of transcultural psychiatry across countries. We want to make sure clinicians develop an understanding of patients' and families cultures to help in their care and treatment.

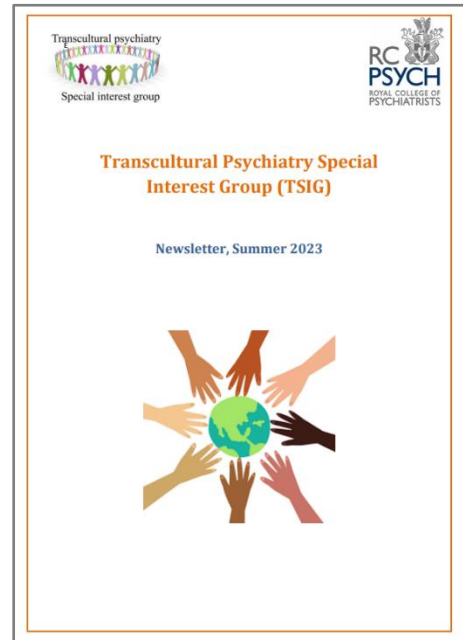


Dr Fabida Aria,  
TSIG Chair

Our 2023 achievements:

- Promoted transcultural psychiatry through our executive and wider membership.
- Provided input to the College race and equality framework meetings and took part in the consultation to the Governments' Covid enquiry.
- Members spoke at various events – for example on cultural intelligence at RCPsych events and at psychiatry society meetings; transcultural psychiatry at national and international conferences.
- Seminar on transcultural psychiatry for psychotherapy trainees at Warwick university in 2023. This is booked again 2024.
- Joined the Annual SIG Chairs' Day in November 2023.
- Webinar on Solastalgia by Dr Ayesha Ahmad in November 2023.
- Regular updates in newsletters, shared on social media.
- Many of our executive members have positions in the College and in other organisations and promote the need to value diversity and reduce inequalities. They have been involved in training events and talks both in the UK and abroad, on a range of topics.
- We have spoken to some of the office bearers to ask about the transcultural sig becoming a faculty, as culture encompasses all sigs, faculties and divisions.

- We have linked with diaspora group and the chair is a member of the diaspora committee.
- We have linked with the International team and informed MTI trainees about the transcultural psychiatry special interest group and diaspora groups.
- We have linked with several universities and have given talks to medical students at psychiatry societies at several universities which have been well received.
- We had a drop-in slot at International Congress 2023 for delegates to talk to executive members on the sig. We also collaborated with other sigs.
- We have linked with psychiatrists in India, Pakistan, Arab countries and members have attended various conferences to share information. We also had an international guest attend one of our meetings in June 2023. We published information about these in our newsletters.



The Transcultural SIG  
Newsletter

**Dr Fabida Aria, Transcultural Psychiatry SIG Chair**



# Volunteering and International Psychiatry Special Interest Group

The aim of the Volunteering and International Special Interest Group (VIPSIG) is primarily altruistic – we promote and support mental health accessibility to all regardless of location and means. We currently have over 4,800 members.

Highlights from 2023:

- International Liaison with UN Volunteers and Diaspora psychiatric groups based in the UK for international collaboration.
- Increasing membership engagement and hosting an annual conference.
- Successful webinar in collaboration with UN Volunteers and subsequent partnership with British Bangladeshi Psychiatrist Association in hosting webinar on restrictive practices and perinatal mental health service development.
- Membership engagement increased with successful drop-in session at RCPsych IC congress and initiating a video pitch competition for the first time.



Dr Anis Ahmed,  
VIPSIG Chair

**Managing Safe Seclusion Facilities: Reducing Harm and Promoting Least Restrictive Practice**  
BSMHFT Tamarind Centre Panelists  
**Dr. Dinesh Maganty, Clinical Lead**

Webinar: Sunday 25 June 0900 am British Summer Time

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86420704028?pwd=UXRQb2NkYUJlRlRlTVZlcUlnaUo0aDZkdz09>  
Meeting ID: 864 2070 4028  
Passcode: DMCAA

Speakers: Abdirisak Hussein, PSW; Lynsey Moorby, Matron; Dr. Anis Ahmed, Chair VIPSIG RCPsych; Andrew Spicer ANP; Patrick Bennett ANP; Nathaniel De Villiers, Project Manager; Hassel Ndoro, CNM.

**WEBINAR: VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WITH UNITED NATIONS**

DATE: 30 MARCH 2023  
TIME: 12.00 NOON GMT

Speakers: MANUEL BRAKAJ (United Nations Volunteers), DR. FABIDA ARIA (Medical Director, BSMHFT), DR. ANIS AHMED (Chair VIPSIG, Royal College of Psychiatrists).

REGISTER / JOIN THE WEBINAR: [https://undp.zoom.us/webinar/register/wn\\_0LHUBCZNSUSPWZ2JAKZCZW](https://undp.zoom.us/webinar/register/wn_0LHUBCZNSUSPWZ2JAKZCZW)

**PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE: UK - BANGLADESH INITIATIVE WEBINAR 2023**

28 MAY 2230hrs LIVE ON ZOOM  
5 U N D A Y Bangladesh Time <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84183243833>

Speakers: DR. TRUDI SENEVIRATNE (OBE, FRCPsych), BRIG. GEN. DR. AZIZUL ISLAM, DR. ANIS AHMED, HON. PROF. DR. SHAMM F. KARIH, PROF. KAMAL CHOWDHURY, MONIRA RAHMAN.

JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY BANGLADESH MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK & BRITISH BANGLADESHI PSYCHIATRIST ASSOCIATION

Events VIPSIG members have been involved with in 2023



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### VIPSIG drop-in, Congress, July 2023

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We were delighted to host a successful VIPSIG conference at the College in London in October, featuring the invaluable perspectives of Professor Vikram Patel, the Pershing Square Professor of Global Health at Harvard Medical School and Professor Mohammed Al-Uzri, Presidential Lead for Global Mental Health Strategy at RCPsych. We also heard about the importance of volunteering from Dr Liz Bates, who discussed opportunities with the Freedom from Torture charity. We were joined by Professor Nandini Chakraborti from Leicester, Dr Fabida Aria, Chair of the Transcultural SIG, Dr Jacques van Hoof, MD PhD Neuropsychiatrist from the International Mental Health Alliance (IMHA), discussing fostering intercultural exchange among mental health professionals from the Netherlands, Belgium, and beyond.



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### VIPSIG Annual Conference, October 2023

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**Dr Anis Ahmed, Volunteering and International Psychiatry SIG Chair**

## Women's Mental Health Special Interest Group

We have over 5,600 members and have been running since 1995.

WMHSIG has an overarching aim to improve the mental health of women everywhere. More specifically, it aims to function as a network to improve mental health services for women; to engage the public in discussions about social and cultural issues relevant to women's mental health; to contribute to a public women's mental health agenda; and to support women psychiatrists' working lives.



We have several active workstreams with regular meetings and input into policy work at College and National levels.

### **Violence Against Women and Girls workstream led by Philippa Greenfield:**

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Dr Stella Kingett,  
WMHSIG Chair

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- Sexual violence: RCPsych has signed up to National Sexual Safety Charter
- Domestic abuse:
  - Philippa Greenfield and Marilia Calcia continue to chair/attend both the INCA\_DVA, working on best practice guidance in mental health for responding to perpetrators.
  - Philippa Greenfield, Marilia Calcia and Louise Howard have updated the College CPD on domestic abuse.
  - Philippa Greenfield and Louise Howard have worked with the Dean to get domestic abuse into the curriculum including developing content on domestic abuse for new public mental health course.

### **Complex Caring Responsibilities Workstream lead by Raka Maitra:**

- Representing this minority at College committees to foster inclusion, signposting to resources, liaising with other Royal Colleges and with HEE
- Currently developing statement from the College regarding carers
- Looking at accessibility of events and training offered by College



## Main Conference workstream lead by Stella Kingett:

- Conference titled “Listening to Matriarchs and Inspirational Older Women”. All speakers were women over 60 which included trail blazing medical leaders and therapists and also women with decades of experience in feminist activism including for Black and Asian women, women in secure settings and in the field of abortion rights and VAWG. We had around 150 attendees and received highly positive feedback, including descriptions such as “joyous”, “riveting”, “vibrant” and that it had a “palpable sense of community”, “like finding your own tribe”.
- At lunchtime there was a tribute to Fiona Subotsky at which Fiona spoke about her fascinating career.
- Dr Pearl Hettiaratchy kindly presented the WMHSIG essay and poster prizes and the conference was closed by President Lade Smith with warmth and authenticity.



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Highlights from the WMHSIG annual conference, December 2023

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## Dr Stella Kingett Women and Mental Health SIG Chair

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To find out more about the work of the SIGs, visit the **College website:**  
[Special Interest Groups SIGs | Royal College of Psychiatrists \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/special-interest-groups)

Or **email** us on: [sigs@rcpsych.ac.uk](mailto:sigs@rcpsych.ac.uk)

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