

# NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY

**No. 21, October 2002**

Edited by Thomas M. Gehring and Peter K. Smith

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IAFP publishes a newsletter which is mailed out about every four months. Sample issues can be downloaded from the IAFP homepage or may be obtained from your national representative (see [www.iafpsy.org](http://www.iafpsy.org)) and the editors: Thomas M. Gehring, Ph.D. (E-mail: [tmgehring@bluewin.ch](mailto:tmgehring@bluewin.ch)) and Peter K. Smith, Ph.D. (E-mail: [P.Smith@gold.ac.uk](mailto:P.Smith@gold.ac.uk)).

## **Welcome Address of the New Editors**

Family psychology is a specialized area within psychology which is growing constantly. This relatively young discipline is devoted to the study of parents, children and their relationships in the context of the family as an organized system. Family psychology is an offshoot of developmental psychology and can be located on the borderline between clinical psychology and social psychology. It stresses the systematic evaluation of distinct theories and the conceptualization of empirically-derived interventions and is not limited to a particular school or paradigm, and can therefore be labeled as an integrative or eclectic approach.

Over the last few years, an increasing number of theoretical and empirical work has been published in the field of family psychology. This transdisciplinary approach centers around the following six main topics:

- The family in the context of changing societies
- Family belief systems in different cultures
- Changes in family structures across the family life cycle
- Inter-generational relationships, and transmission of behaviours and values across generations
- Biopsychosocial components of family stress, coping strategies and health related outcomes
- Evidence-based preventive and therapeutic interventions on various levels of the family system.

Researchers and practitioners of various disciplines agree that the family is an important unit with regard to the biopsychosocial development of its members. The widely used theoretical approaches to conceptualize the quality of life of the family and its members include biological, psychological and sociological perspectives. It can be assumed that the development of family members and the organization of their relational structures are intertwined, and that both individual and environmental aspects should thus be taken into account and conceptually integrated.

There is a continual need for further differentiation in interpersonal concepts as in health promotion, prevention, therapy and rehabilitation. The systematic consideration of family relations is a useful addition to the traditional notions of individual risk factors and pathology. The integration of both perspectives allows a holistic view of the complexity of human development. As a consequence, social support strategies and health care will be improved by an enhanced evaluation of individual and family processes as well as by resources that permit effective interventions.

We would like to thank Luciano L'Abate from the United States, the former Editor of the IAFP Newsletter and Founding President of our innovative, international Society. He provided significant support for the editorial process of this issue of the Newsletter.

We look forward to our Newsletter stimulating creative communication between IAFP members all over the world, and hope that contributions from distinct professional perspectives will be submitted to us in the future. We welcome diverse forms of contribution: news of member's interests, new research activities, reports from relevant conferences, reviews of family psychology in particular countries, reviews of books, letters and debates on important issues.

Zurich and London

Thomas M. Gehring and Peter K. Smith

**Important Note:**

In order to keep mailing costs as low as possible, we kindly request those IAFP members with an e-mail address who receive the Newsletter by regular mail to send their e-mail address to:

Harald Werneck, Ph.D. (Treasurer), e-mail: [harald.werneck@univie.ac.at](mailto:harald.werneck@univie.ac.at)

## From the President's Desk

Sabine Walper, PhD

This newsletter welcomes many new members who joined the International Academy of Family Psychology at our fourth meeting in Heidelberg. This IAFP conference was the first which took place in Germany and proved very successful in bringing together family psychologists from 20 different countries and almost all continents. 146 papers and posters were presented on a broad range of issues addressing the impact of social change on families, challenges to partnership and parent-child relations, prevention and intervention strategies from family and couple therapy to community based approaches as well as issues of family diagnostics. More about the conference can be read in the paper by Klaus Schneewind who shared his final notes on the meeting with the audience. A short version of his paper is reprinted in this newsletter, and the full paper can be obtained from our website ([www.iafpsy.org](http://www.iafpsy.org)).

By now, IAFP has clearly become established as an active organization which seeks to promote the exchange among family psychologists. We are most grateful to the former executive board and most notably our past president Florence Kaslow for their initiative in building a productive network and their commitment to IAFP. The new board shows continuity as well as change: Gregory Jurkovic (U.S.A.), our former treasurer, was elected as vice president, Gordon Harold (U.K.) was appointed as new secretary, Harald Werneck (Austria) joined the board as treasurer, and I left my position as secretary to now serve as president. The newsletter is now jointly edited by Thomas Gehring (Switzerland) and Peter K. Smith (U.K.). We all hope to carry on successfully what has been initiated and built up by the past board and the continuously active founding president of IAFP, Luciano L'Abate.

In 1990 when IAFP was founded, founding members came from four nations: Japan, the U.S.A., Italy, and Germany. By now, IAFP has national representatives in 19 countries. We are most happy to welcome several new national representatives: Lea Perez Day (who represents IAFP jointly with Zelia Maria Biasoli Alves in Brazil), Bernard Terrisse (Canada), Gabriele Gloger-Tippelt (Germany), Zipora Magen (Israel), Abdulaziz Alhassan (Saudi Arabia), and David McGill as well as Kay Debs (both U.S.A.). At the same time, we experienced a very sad loss: Nobuaki Kuniya (Japan) who had so long been committed to IAFP has passed away. Our deeply felt condolence goes to his family and friends. More recently, scholars from neighboring disciplines have joined IAFP. Although our main focus is on psychological issues and approaches in studying family life, many important questions in the field are highly

complex and need to be jointly addressed by family psychology, family sociology, demography, and education. Hence, we are delighted to welcome several new members from these neighboring disciplines who have so much to contribute.

The next four years will be devoted not only to making international exchange easier, but also to fostering cross-national research. The meeting in Heidelberg provided a chance to meet and see common research issues. As Klaus Schneewind pointed out in his final notes, we now ought to strengthen international and cross-cultural perspectives in research by building collaborative networks. Some initiative to this end has already been taken in Heidelberg, focusing on effects of divorce. No doubt there are more issues in the field which could most fruitfully be addressed in a comparative approach. Those who are interested may use IAFP as a resource to find out about relevant research in other countries and make contact to the people involved. Don't hesitate to contact us. We will distribute your questions and announcements among IAFP members by email. And of course, we will rely on our national representative's expertise.

IAFP wishes you all a most productive new academic year. Keep in touch!

**What have we learned? - Final notes**  
**Presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International**  
**Academy of Family Psychology**  
**Heidelberg, Germany, April 7 to 10, 2002**

Klaus A. Schneewind, University of Munich  
Department of Psychology

I presume that most if not all of you might be a little exhausted after three and a half days packed with scientific information and inspiring collegial conversations - not to mention the many highlights of the city of Heidelberg and other social attractions. I hope that you are not expecting me to present something like a condensed overview of the many substantial contributions to this conference. This would be a Herculean task - a task impossible to shoulder within half an hour or so. What you probably expect me to do at the end of my talk is to thank the organizers of the conference for all the effort and work they have put into preparing and hosting the Conference. I am sure you all agree with me that Jeanette Roos, Sabine Walper and their visible and less visible coworkers have done a terrific job in attracting a truly international group of family psychologists to present and discuss their latest research. And, in addition, with a loving attitude, they have done everything to provide a pleasant ambience stimulating all of us to be attentive listeners and lively discussants. Therefore, I feel quite positive that you all join in a warm and heartfelt Thank You for making the Heidelberg Conference a very special and unforgettable event.

Let us not forget, however, that the Heidelberg Conference stands on the shoulders of IAFP as an organization. Considering this, the officers of IAFP - in particular, its outgoing president Florence Kaslow with her engaging personality and Luciano L'Abate with his persistent effort to keep us informed via the IAFP Newsletter - contributed a lot during the last four years to promote the mission of IAFP.

I am sure that all of you know that the International Academy of Family Psychology was founded 12 years ago in Tokyo where also the first conference was held. In Tokyo we agreed to have IAFP conferences at a four year interval. The second conference took place in 1994 in Padua, Italy, and the third meeting in 1998 in Athens, USA. Although I have not counted the number of contributions to the preceding conferences, I am sure that the Heidelberg meeting is the most productive concerning the number and diversity of presentations. Including the opening lecture we

listened to six invited and keynote lectures. There were 11 symposia with altogether 52 presentations, 10 paper sessions with 43 presentations, two interactive poster groups with nine contributions, seven individual poster sessions comprising 35 posters, and finally one discussion group. All in all, these are 146 presentations - a truly impressive number for a relatively small Academy which IAFP still is. As to the internationality of the conference, the participants came from 20 different countries which is also quite an impressive figure although there is some room for further development.

Let me now briefly turn to the topics covered by the conference. Here, we find a rich diversity of themes including, incidentally, the issue of family diversity itself. Several presentations have addressed classical family psychology topics focusing on different stages of the normative family life cycle and its derailments. Thus, we gained some new insights in the workings of couple relationships. We listened to new findings dealing with the still intriguing transition to parenthood and its antecedents and consequences. We acquainted ourselves with new research analyzing children's representations of family relationships from the vantage point of attachment theory. We improved our knowledge about the interplay of couple and parent-child relationships, particularly when couple relationships are conflict laden. We learned more about the normative patterns of adolescent development in the family context as well as the more challenging aspect of dealing with adolescent aggression. We got a more differentiated picture of the dynamics of long-lasting marriages and the many transitions they have to go through and to cope with. And we acquired new evidence about those who don't continue a long-term marriage and end up in separation or divorce, with all its varied consequences for the partners and the children, respectively. Many if not all of these topics make it necessary to be aware of the complexities of within-family dynamics which was the main focus of a special symposium and also of some of the predominantly methodological presentations.

Besides the family life cycle, another inherently organizing principle of family life is the family's embeddedness in its extrafamilial context. Several contributions addressed family-school and family-work interrelationships yielding interesting new findings. In addition, major societal changes and their impact on the family were also the subject of a number of presentations. Besides the consequences of the German unification, in particular, and, more generally, the implications of an increased professional mobility on family life, I'd like to specially mention the research presented in the symposium on "Families and personal development in times of war". Here, we were confronted with war as a special and haunting facet of man-made catastrophic stressors and their sometimes long-lasting transgenerational impact on families and individual family members as well.

Another important topic covered by several presentations was how families deal with the strains associated with chronic handicaps and diseases that one or more of their members suffer from. The findings of these studies can profit a lot from the more general insights concerning the quality of social support and coping in families which was the topic of another cluster of presentations.

While all the topics that I have touched upon so far were represented in the conference with quite a few contributions, this was not the case, for example, with studies on cross-cultural aspects of family life. Considering that IAFP is an academy with international aspirations I contend that the dearth of studies in this realm gives some cause for concern. Another topic that, in my view, despite its relevance for applied family psychology, was quite underrepresented in the conference is couple and family intervention. Although one poster group and two or three more presentations hidden in other topical contexts dealt explicitly with interventive aspects in family psychology, I am sure that research on family intervention has more to offer than was shown in this conference. Thus, we have to state that the majority of presentations addressed issues pertaining to basic research in family psychology. Of course, this is no deficit at all because, as we all know, good basic research is the foundation of adequate applied research which, in turn, is an indispensable prerequisite of responsible professional practice when working with families in trouble or seeking help. Therefore, I believe, that, in the future, we'll have to pay more attention to and invest more energy into applied research in family psychology. In other words, we'll have to strengthen the important link between basic research and the work of family practitioners. First, however, I'd like to make a few remarks on the assets of family psychology.

In my view, the beauty and charm of family psychology is that it is a truly integrative discipline. In fact, choosing to make family life as one's preferred subject of psychological study makes it necessary to draw on a number of traditional psychology disciplines such as personality, social, developmental or biological psychology, or, at a more applied level, clinical, educational and organizational psychology. In addition, family psychology is not only integrative at the intradisciplinary level but also open to other disciplines approaching the family from their specific point of view such as family sociology, family education, family medicine, family law or family demography to name but a few.

But family psychology is not merely an eclectic conglomeration of well-established traditional disciplines. Rather, family psychology has to offer its own scientific profile - theoretically, methodologically and with respect to practical implications. This special scientific profile has influenced and,

at a growing rate, continues to influence the work being done in other psychological disciplines. In particular, the impact of a systemic-contextualistic framework which is characteristic of family psychology can increasingly be traced in more traditional psychological disciplines such as developmental or personality psychology. In addition, the paradigm shift from first to second order cybernetics in family systems theory has paved the way for a constructivist approach acknowledging the view that truth is always "in the eye of the beholder" - be it the family members themselves or the professionals working with them. Moreover, upon conceiving of families as special relationship systems of co-developing individuals from the vantage point of a systemic-contextualistic framework, a plethora of specific and continually refined theories have emerged over the years including, for example, attachment theory, attribution theory, social cognitive theory, several variants of cognitive behavioral approaches, psychodynamic theories, stress and coping theories, and so forth. They all have added and continue to add to a solid knowledge base in family psychology.

Another asset of family psychology which it shares, albeit in its special way, with other psychological disciplines is its growing methodological strength and rigor. This does not only hold true for innovative assessment strategies ranging from new observation technologies to qualitative approaches such as the assessment of family narratives. Incidentally, all these approaches flourish in peaceful coexistence and sometimes even cooperation.

In addition, more sophisticated strategies of data analysis have been developed and are increasingly being used in family research. Structural equation modeling has become a major data analytic strategy that more and more data sets have the privilege of being treated with. Moreover, particularly in longitudinal studies, data analytic procedures such as growth curve analysis or the decomposition of dyadic correlations into actor, partner or dyadic components alert us to the growing methodological sophistication in family research. Finally, differential or typological analyses allow for a more fine-grained picture of family life and its sometimes grossly varying developmental paths.

Apart from these and other welcomed methodological innovations and refinements, I believe that one of the most important assets of family psychology in recent years is its strong emphasis on family processes. In particular, this pertains to those processes that mediate structural features of couple or family systems and specific outcomes at the individual and relationship level such as health, well-being, competence, deviance, violence etc. Focusing on family processes, i.e., mainly interactional and communication processes, without forgetting moderating structural variables, i.e., for example, personality dispositions, or

contextual influences such as relationship history or economic pressures, is a major theoretical and methodological advancement in family research. Findings from process-oriented family studies lay the ground for sensible intervention research and eventually provide appropriate tools for successful interventive practice. In my opinion, this does not just reflect a naive trust in the alleged benefits of science. On the contrary, there are several good examples in family psychology that attest to the merit of such an approach.

Despite the many laudable assets of family psychology, the many problems of this relatively young discipline should not be overlooked. I'll just mention three of them.

In the first place, working and doing research in the family psychology arena is, due to its very subject, an enormously complex task. Consider, for example, family communication which is supposed to be the most important vehicle in the process of establishing family relationships. I have already mentioned that, when we adopt a constructivist position, each family member has his or her own version of family reality. Family members, regardless whether they are children or adults, are active and sometimes rather intractable participants in the family dance. Based on their personal and relationship history and on the conditions of the present context, they have their own motives, intentions, expectations and interpretations conveyed by specific acts of communication. This makes it extremely difficult to gain an adequate understanding of what particular communications actually mean. Sometimes this difficulty even holds for the person him- or herself and much more so for other family members, let alone professionals working with the whole family. Thus, family communication implies a great deal of lay and professional hermeneutic which, in my opinion, is still not well understood and in need of more attention in future family research.

A second more general problem of families which, as a consequence, becomes a problem for family psychology as well is the transformation of heteronomous requirements and constraints into autonomous thought and action within the family context. In less abstract terms, it's the problem to bring people to the point that they do something of their own accord which they initially did not want to do. In fact, this is quite often a problem in couple relationships, in parenting or in transactions with members of the family of origin. And, of course, it's a problem in other social institutions and settings as well, for example in schools, at the workplace or, still another example, in the therapy room when doing family therapy.

One of the tenets of family systems theory is that, because families are conceived as operatively closed systems, there is no such thing as

"instructive interaction". Fortunately, another principle of systems theory informs us about the process of "structural coupling" which means that, albeit the environment of a personal or social system can not directly change the system, the environment can stimulate or perturb the system to activate its potential for self-organisation. Despite the various techniques of joining that are being used in therapy to create a good working relationship with clients, I believe that we know fairly little about the precise processes of structural coupling. A good starting point for further work might be Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory. Another aspect is that, in the case of family life and elsewhere, the issue of transforming heteronomous goals into autonomous goals has much to do with values, opportunities, restraints, rules, limits, and so forth. Thus, we run right into the fundamentals underlying the many facets of cultural and subcultural diversity of family life.

A third general problem that family psychology has to deal with is the problem of development. Sure, we know a lot about family developmental tasks, their biological and cultural determinants, and their normative or less normative sequence across the family life cycle. We know less, however, concerning the precise processes that lead to qualitative changes in the relationship patterns of couples and families. From the meta-theoretical point of view of family systems theory structural or second order change is described with respect to the principle of "emergence" which is supposed to be triggered by new so-called attractors, i.e., new incentives, priorities or goals causing a personal or social system to reorganize its internal parameters of self-regulation. At the descriptive level, we can imagine such changed patterns of self-regulation, for example, in the case of a person who falls in love or when a family plans to build a house. The exact processes, however, that engender structural changes are mostly still in the dark, despite the strong emphasis on process-oriented research that I mentioned above.

So far I have put my finger on some general problems that, in my view, need more attention in family psychology. I now turn to some more concrete desiderata. Here, of course, many ideas can be discussed that might be helpful to promote the case of family psychology. I restrict myself to three points.

Earlier I deplored the lack of cross-cultural studies in this conference. I feel that particularly an organisation such as the International Academy of Family Psychology should have more of these studies in its program and I wonder what can be done to make this happen. As a founding member of IAFP I recall that, when we discussed the by-laws of the Academy, we agreed to install a world wide network of family psychologists with the intention to foster cooperation and eventually joint projects. Apparently, for whatsoever reasons this plan did not work out sufficiently.

Another informal opportunity to initiate cross-cultural research would be to bring together colleagues from different countries but with similar interests at conferences like this one to discuss the possibilities of getting joint projects on the way. Incidentally, putting this into effect should not be too difficult because in many instances one could continue with what one is doing anyway, except, perhaps, for some methodological adaptations concerning the samples and assessment instruments used.

A third possibility would imply that the IAFP board itself becomes active and provides some kind of incentive, for example, by promising a special award for cross-cultural family research that could then be granted at the next conference.

The second desideratum refers to a particular research topic. Day after day, we read or hear in the media that we live in the era of globalization. Admittedly, globalization is a rather fuzzy term meaning lots of different things ranging from migration, multiculturalism to the so-called new economy. The latter meaning of globalization relates to what is being called neo-liberal capitalism. Prototypical of this kind of economy is a growing number of highly competitive companies that are active at a world-wide level supported by super-fast information technologies and trans-national financial services. People working under these conditions are required to have two characteristics besides being sufficiently competent and young: They must be flexible and they must be mobile. In his book "The corrosion of character" the US sociologist Richard Sennett has described, based on a small number of case studies, what economic globalization and its changed work conditions mean for people's personality and relationship development. Apart from a few studies, one of which, by the way, was presented at this conference by a team of family sociologists, we have virtually no solid information about people who are working under the conditions of a globalized economy. What we know so far is not very pleasing, indeed, as far as reliable couple and family relations are concerned. Therefore, I strongly plead for more research in this field and, in particular, for more active participation on the part of family psychologists.

My last point focuses on the gap between research and practice. In a recent article, Larry Steinberg, a renowned expert in parent-adolescent relationships, contended "We know some things". After a thorough review of a multitude of studies on parent-adolescent relationships with a particular emphasis on authoritative parenting he called for more political and social action for the benefit of those who are supposed to profit most from the principles of effective parenting, i.e., the parents and their children. Let me quote from what he said at the end of his article: "We need a systematic, large-scale, multifaceted, and ongoing public health campaign to educate parents about adolescence that draws on the

collective resources and expertise of health care professionals, scientists, governmental agencies, community organizations, schools, religious institutions, and the mass media."

I strongly agree with this statement and I would like to generalize it to other topics of family psychology such as, for example, couple relationships. The essence of responsible practice is that it is backed up by sound basic and applied research. The quality of couple relationships and parenting are at the heart of family psychology. And, fortunately, we have a broad knowledge base and scientifically proven intervention strategies in both fields. Therefore, Larry Steinberg is right when he says: "We really know some things." However, family psychologists are usually not very active when it comes to bridging the gap between research and practice, particularly at the public level. Organisations like IAFP or the newly founded European Society on Family Relations could help to pave the way to make the benefits of family psychology more visible and to put them into practice.

Concerning the European Society on Family Relations I should perhaps say a few words since I learnt that many colleagues expressed some concern about what this new organization is heading for. Some even speculated that the new European Society is intended to be a rival organization to IAFP. I am sure that, for two major reasons, this is certainly not the case. First, the mission statement of the European Society on Family Relations is to provide a forum for family researchers who are interested in the structure and processes of family life at the European level because in the years to come we'll have to face specific problems for couples and families within the expanding boundaries of the European Union. Second, the emphasis on family relations is meant to attract not only colleagues from the field of family psychology but also family specialists from other disciplines such as family sociology, family education, family law, etc.

Thus, I think the new European Society on Family Relations might become a welcomed complement to the International Academy of Family Psychology - hopefully thriving on good inter-organizational relationships. Incidentally, the first conference of the European Society on Family Relations will be held at the end of October this year hosted by Jan Gerris and his team at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, Netherlands. I am sure that Jan Gerris would be happy to provide you with further information about the conference. Attending the Nijmegen conference would give us an opportunity to meet again in a not too distant future. After all, we'll have to wait until 2006 for the next IAFP meeting.

International Roving Reporter

## **International Student Days in Heidelberg – IAFP Style**

Florence Kaslow, Ph.D., Immediate Past President, IAFP

The International Academy of Family Psychology met in beautiful Heidelberg during April, 2002. This is a small organization in which a doctorate is a requirement for membership. About 180 family psychologists from far flung countries convened at the University of Education for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Meeting of the I.A.F.P. Co-Chairs Sabine Walper and Jeanette Roos, with their respective committees, did an excellent job of putting together a very rich conference program. It is not possible in a short article to mention all of the fine presentations.

The theme "Families in Context: International Perspectives on Change" provided a unifying focus while still permitting a wide range of presentations. As usual, much of the excitement of international conferences emanated from meeting people from different countries. This time we had participants from Cyprus, Holland, the Sudan, Turkey and Wales, as well as from Austria, Italy, Israel, Japan, Poland, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic, in addition to Germany and the United States. The interaction level was high and the poster presentations, as well as the plenary sessions and panels, were well thought out and most were predicted upon methodologically sound research studies. Many of the presentations included sophisticated power point materials – so much so that I thought that these sometimes distracted from the verbal presentations.

Popular topic areas included:

- Separation, Divorce and Divorce Mediation
- Effects of Inter-parental Conflict on Children
- Impact of Families on Achievement: Related Attitudes and Academic Success
- Family Diversity
- Developmental patterns in Adolescence
- Family and Work
- Missing and Non-Involved Fathers
- Families and Health – Psychosomatic Illnesses
- Families and Personal Development in Times of War.

The latter panel was particularly timely as it considered the trauma of clear loss and ambivalent loss, (usually) as exemplified in a missing father in the Yugoslav/Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian conflicts, as well as the impact

of larger post-traumatic stress from the Bosnian War and the recent changes in the former Soviet Union. A multitude of countries are now recipients of refugees and immigrants from war torn areas and how to help them is a universal dilemma for family psychologists/ therapists in both the research and therapy areas. The presentations were from psychologists who have been on the front lines, and were provocative and disturbing.

I was invited to do the Opening Plenary on Family Psychology Around the World and presented a kaleidoscopic overview. There was much appreciation of the fact that in the United States, APA has accorded recognition to family psychology as a specialty and that there is Board Certification at the diplomate level in family psychology. Many academic departments in diverse countries would like to start and/or expand their family psychology programs and gain broader recognition of this substantive area as a specialty in psychology. We hope some of the leaders abroad will apply for their Board Certification and that our ABPP will be willing to accept those who meet our requirements.

The other plenary I gave was entitled "Consultation to Family Businesses: With a Focus on Gender Issues". In many areas of the world, both in the developing as well as in the Western countries, family businesses comprise anywhere from 60 to 80% of the extant enterprises. However, in countries that still have a family structure that is patriarchal and/or patrilineal, the family business belongs to and is run by the male members of the family. The women in some of these countries may have a covert influence on their husbands, but it is exercised at home and not in the board room or any other part of the work place. I talked about the myriad roles wives, mothers, daughters, nieces and female cousins play in family businesses in the United States and how this has become a reality. We considered how this possibility could come to pass in other countries, particularly where women are considered inferior, are expected to be subservient and to abide by clearly defined, traditional, stereotypical gender roles. Some thought entry into the male dominated workplace, especially as equals, no matter how carefully orchestrated, was a long way off and would require major societal change before being possible. I tried to encourage them to at least consider taking the initial steps along the pathway.

All were pleased and honored that Dr. Klaus Schneewind, one of the founders of IAFP, and a highly respected Professor of Family Psychology at the University of Munich, delivered a comprehensive final address – summarizing the themes of the conference.

Past Presidents of IAFP who were present included Founding President Luciano L'Abate of the United States, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> President, Mario Cusinato

of Italy. We missed the 2<sup>nd</sup> President, Dr. Okado and many of our revered colleagues from Japan, who were unable to attend.

All of this took place in Heidelberg, which has one of the oldest Universities in Western Europe; it was opened to female students around 1900. Despite that, here and elsewhere, few women have ascended to the top strata of University and Institute administration and leadership positions.

There was much to enjoy in the charming old city that is nestled on the lovely Neckar River, along which all of the blossom trees were blooming and aburst with color. Walking around the Alte Stadt provided a peaceful oasis from the CNN newscasts of the horrendous conflicts in Israel, where the ethno-political and religious warfare is again causing the same kind of strife and trauma so recently confronted in Bosnia. Hopefully, as family psychologists, we can conduct the research to expand the foundations necessary from which to launch permanent peace promoting activities and be in the forefront of therapeutic and public advocacy efforts to ameliorate the massive suffering already caused and prevent future genocides.

As I write this column, I want to reiterate my thanks to all of you for allowing me to serve as President from 1998-2002 and wish my best to Dr. Sabine Walper and her new Board. IAFP and Sabine will of course continue to have my complete support.

## **EC-funded project on Grandparenting and Inter-Generational Relationships**

A Research Training Network on Grandparenthood and Intergenerational Relationships in Aging European Populations is starting and will last for 4 years (2002-2006). The Network, funded by the EC under its Framework 5 programme, brings together 7 teams. The coordinating team, led by Professor Peter Smith, is at the Unit for School and Family Studies of the Department of Psychology at Goldsmiths College, London, England. The partner teams and team leaders are Dr Claudine Attias-Donfut, Fondation Nationale de Gerontologie, Paris, France; Professor Helena Hurme, Aabo Akademi University, Vaasa, Finland; Dr Sarah Harper, Institute of Aging, Oxford University, England; Professor Gunhild Hagestad, Agder University College, Kristiansand, Norway; Professor Constanza Tobio, Universidad Carlos III, Madrid, Spain; and Dr Liz Mestheneos, National School of Public Health, Athens, Greece.

The Network has a series of project objectives, which include:

- Collating knowledge across EU states regarding the demographic position of grandparents, their family relationships, their economic position, and their state of health; drawing together the range of existing knowledge, and identifying gaps in this knowledge for which further research is needed.
- Collating information on legal issues and policies across European countries as they affect rights and responsibilities of grandparents.
- Examining the employment implications of grandparents caring for young grandchildren.
- Examining the impact on inter-generational relationships of families/societies in transition:  
for example, what kinds of issues are experienced by grandparents in families of mixed marriages? When parents separate or divorce, there can be a great impact on grandparent-grandchild relationships. The impact of technology is another factor - traditionally, grandparents have communicated with grandchildren by visits, letters, and telephone. Increasingly, they are using text messages, email and the internet. How is this changing the role of grandparents, and how 'user-friendly' are these technologies for grandparents?
- Examining images of grandparents and attitudes to aging in the media and in the general population.

The research network is multidisciplinary, covering Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Health, Law, Micro-Economics and Demographic/Population Studies, Health Care. The research methods will be characterised by a range of methods including both quantitative and qualitative approaches; triangulation of different perspectives and

methods; validation work for new scales and methods; and comparative work across different European states.

An important part of Networks such as these is the training of young researchers, from other EC member or associated states (or who have lived there for the last 5 years). Young researchers can be pre-doctoral or post-doctoral, but should be 35 years. They need to work with a team in a different European country from their native country. Length of appointments can vary from 3 to 36 months. The training will encourage interdisciplinary ways of working and collaboration.

**Anyone interested in applying for these vacancies** should go to the project website at [www.gold.ac.uk/rtn](http://www.gold.ac.uk/rtn), or the EU CORDIS website at <http://improving.cordis.lu/rtn/>



Team leaders of the 7 teams in the project, at Goldsmiths College for the inaugural project meeting in May 2002

## Publications

*Florence Kaslow*, immediate past president of IAFP has recently had her 4 volume set of the Comprehensive Handbook of Psychotherapy published by John Wiley in New York. Each volume of this edited collection covers a different major school of psychotherapy. It is a monumental collection in size and substance.

*Thomas M. Gehring, Peter K. Smith* (national representatives and co-editors of the IAFP Newsletter) and *Marianne Debry* have recently published the following comprehensive Sourcebook about the Family System Test (FAST):

Gehring, T.M., Debry, M. & Smith, P.K. The Family System Test (FAST) (eds): Theory and Application. Hove and Philadelphia: Routledge, 2001.

For further information, about the Family System Test (FAST), please visit [www.fast-test.com](http://www.fast-test.com)

## Obituary

On August 12, we received the following sad news from Luciano L'Abate, past Editor of the IAFP Newsletter:

"*Dr. Nobuaki Kunjia*, a founding member and current Board Member of the Academy passed away this week. He was the former Director of Tokyo Family Therapy Institute and Full Professor at an important Japanese University. With his passing, the Academy loses a dear friend, a caring individual, a great scholar, and a complete professional. Those of us who knew him and considered him their friend, know that we shall miss him greatly. We convey to his wife Shuze our most profound condolences and sympathies."

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