

## Article

### **Subheader for this section:**

**Title:** Experiences from an international member of Division 54

**Teaser:** How well is Division 54 known outside North America?

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### **Text:**

Although I have been involved in pediatric pain research for several years now, the existence of Division 54 was only brought to my attention last year. Aside from having access to the Journal of Pediatric Psychology through my affiliation with Ghent University, the 2013 National Conference in Pediatric Psychology was my first active experience with the benefits the Society of Pediatric Psychology has to offer.

I completed my PhD at Ghent University in Belgium and although the research group I worked with is familiar with and publishes in the Journal of Pediatric Psychology, we were unaware that it was associated with the Society of Pediatric Psychology/Division 54 and their activities. Moreover, our research group was convinced that the National Conference on Pediatric Psychology was only open to North Americans. By moving to Canada for my postdoctoral fellowship I grew aware of Division 54 and its value. My current supervisor, Dr. Christine Chambers, was the first to mention Division 54 to me and she was surprised by my response: "Division 54...?, What does that stand for?".

Becoming a member of the Society of Pediatric Psychology/Division 54 and attending the recent National Conference in New Orleans was an exciting and impressive experience. The Conference was not only an excellent opportunity to meet North American experts on pediatric pain, thereby strengthening these network connections, but also to learn from researchers and practitioners in other pediatric areas such as sleep, obesity and diabetes. I have generally only attended conferences focused on pediatric pain, and hadn't appreciated how much there is to learn from other pediatric disciplines. This conference was a real eye-opener for me, highlighting the similarities between the different areas but also making me aware of the applicability of and interest in my research by other areas in pediatric psychology! Needless to say, I was very motivated after attending the Conference, and regretted not being part of this community earlier. I immediately contacted my previous research group at Ghent University to tell them about Division 54 and convinced them to become members as well and consider attending the next Conference.

I'm delighted to now be a part of the International Committee of the Society of Pediatric Psychology/Division 54, an enthusiastic group devoted to increasing the international visibility of the Society of Pediatric Psychology. I'm thrilled that other people might benefit from my experience!! I'm particularly happy with the name change from National Conference to Annual Conference as this will reduce the confusion about whether or not

international members can attend the meeting, as well as the initiative to feature an international invited speaker at each conference.

Although everyone knows that international connections are crucial to become a successful researcher, as a trainee I found it difficult to make and maintain these connections. Being a member of an international group such as this, in addition to your local memberships, and attending international conferences can facilitate this! During my graduate training I profited from being part of the Dutch Pediatric Psychology Network. Since 2012, the Dutch Network has joined forces with the UK Pediatric Psychology Network, organizing collaborative conferences orientated to all European pediatric psychologists. Recently, the International Committee was informed that they also want to attract more international pediatric psychologist as there would be mutual benefits from the opportunity to share knowledge on pediatric psychology between European and North-American researchers and clinicians. We are excited to combine our efforts for this common goal by promoting attendance to each others conferences, including features in each other's newsletters, and adding useful links to the various pediatric psychology websites. The next joint conference of the Dutch-UK Pediatric Psychology Network will be held in beautiful Amsterdam in June 2014. Hope to see some of you in Amsterdam ☺!

Line

**Image(s):**