

ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY & PSYCHIATRY

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

21ST ANNUAL MEETING

May 16 & 17, 2009

San Francisco, California

THEME: Philosophical Issues in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Conference Co-Chairs:

Christian Perring, Ph.D., Dowling College, NY

Lloyd Wells, M.D., Ph.D., Mayo Clinic, MN

Child and adolescent psychiatry has had relatively little philosophical attention, yet it is rich with theoretical, conceptual, ethical, and social issues. Children and adolescents are still undergoing significant psychological development and they occupy very different social roles from adults, so their experience of emotional and cognitive problems is very different from that of adults. A central issue is whether we should conceive of childhood mental disorder in the same way as adult mental disorder, and how we should acknowledge the differences between children and adults in our classification schemes. It is generally acknowledged that family dynamics can play a major role in the development of a child's emotional problems, and many in the field have argued that the family should be the central unit of treatment. Yet the trend in psychiatry is to move towards a more individualistic or atomistic understanding of mental disorder, and this places child and adolescent psychiatry potentially in tension with the rest of the field. Philosophical discussion has the potential to illuminate and even resolve some of the theoretical disputes. Furthermore, ethical issues have been especially prominent in the treatment of children and adolescents, from the disputes about the potential over-diagnosis and resulting needless treatment of childhood ADHD and depression, to alarming claims that some antidepressants can cause suicidal behavior in young people. In medical ethics, there has been growing awareness of the need to recognize the rights of children, and the importance of sometimes letting them participate in treatment decisions. The task of determining criteria for the competence of young people is especially challenging when they have mental disorders. This AAPP conference will provide the opportunity for researchers in this area to address these and related issues.

Possible topics for presentations:

- Should child and adolescent psychiatry have a different diagnostic scheme for mental disorders from adult psychiatry?
- The role of evolutionary psychology in categorizing mental disorders of youth
- The conceptual relation between family problems and child psychopathology
- The medicalization of normal problems of childhood and adolescence
- Epistemic and conceptual problems in diagnosing mental disorders of infants and very young children
- The conceptual legitimacy of the diagnostic categories of conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder
- Psychiatry's reaction to the relation between eating disorders and increasing social pressures on young people to conform to impossible standards of beauty
- The ethical responsibilities of psychiatrists in prescribing medications to young people when there have been reports of potential increasing risk of suicide
- Ethical issues in genetic testing of children for mental disorders
- Children's capacity to consent to psychiatric treatment or research

Presentations will be strictly limited to 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for discussion. Abstracts should be about 500 words. Deadline December 1, 2008.

Abstracts will be blind reviewed, so the author's identifying information should be attached separately.

Abstracts should be sent to: Christian Perring, Email: cperring@yahoo.com