

EDITORIAL

Parental Brain Conference 2018

The present issue of the *Journal of Neuroendocrinology* is a special edition combining review and original articles contributed by speakers and attendees of the sixth *Parental Brain Conference*. This meeting took place in Toronto, Canada, on the 13th and 14th of July 2018, as a satellite meeting of the *International Congress of Neuroendocrinology*. The *Parental Brain Conference* attracted almost 150 participants from around the globe, from students to senior scientists.

The scientific programme of this sixth *Parental Brain Conference* comprised a wide range of topics related to biological and behavioural perspectives in parental health. Symposia focused on the neurobiology of nurturing; the paternal and alloparental brain; genetics and epigenetics of parenthood; parental brain interactions with the gut, immune system and placenta; and the effects of drugs, toxins and stress on the parental brain. The conference also hosted a Young Investigator Symposium, which was generously supported by Wiley, where six graduate students or postdoctoral fellows were chosen to present their work related to the parental brain. Reviews or research articles from many of these young investigators comprise part of this special issue.

A symposium on the neurobiology of nurturing was inspired and dedicated to the late Dr Craig H. Kinsley, an outstanding contributor to the field of the parental brain, who passed away on 26 January 2016 at the age of 61 years. His most recognised scientific contribution was his work showing that motherhood improves learning and memory and that these changes are related to structural plasticity in the maternal brain. His work received worldwide attention and has inspired many parental brain researchers over the past 20 years.

The *Parental Brain Conference* also included three keynote speakers: Professor John Russell (University of Edinburgh), a founder of these meetings, who discussed maternal brain adaptations in pregnancy; Dr Ruth Feldman (Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya), who spoke about building a human parental brain and why it matters; and Patricia Tomasi (Huffington Post Canada), who gave insights about leveraging social media and advocacy journalism to connect with mothers and families going through postpartum depression. Together, these speakers provided a breadth of knowledge from bench to bedside to advocacy on the importance of parental brain research.

The contributions to the special edition consist of two review articles and a number of original manuscripts on a range of topics studied in avian species, rodent models and humans. Studies include basic research on neurophysiological factors controlling maternal behaviour, as well as how environmental factors can modulate maternal brain and behaviour in health and disease.

We hope you enjoy reading this series of important articles on the parental brain as much as we enjoyed the conference and the subsequent compilation of this special issue.


We would like to express our gratitude to the sponsors of the meeting, namely the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Sage Therapeutics, Elsevier and Wiley.

We are particularly thankful to the *Journal of Neuroendocrinology* for their willingness to publish this special issue on the parental brain.

We hope that this special issue contributes further to unravelling the complexity of the parental brain and encourages a growing body of research focused on understanding the multiple biological and behavioural factors associated with the transition and maintenance of parenting.

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