



Seminar

Conflict: The effect on child mental health Iraq – a case study

Thursday 15 May
5:30 - 8:00

University College London Institute of Child Health
and
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children
30 Guilford Street,
London WC1N 1EH

A seminar with a panel of speakers and discussion

“Ameliorating the effects of war and displacement on children”

Professor William Yule

Emeritus Professor of Applied Child Psychology,
Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London

“The current situation and condition of Iraqi children”

Rosa Mohammed Ali

Iraqi Association and Iraq Child Group

“The effects of trauma on brain and behaviour”

Professor Faraneh Vargha-Khadem

Professor of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience
Institute of Child Health & Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children

Chair - Zarin Hainsworth

President, UNIFEM UK

Free entry
Refreshments
All welcome

Organised by the International Coordination for Gender Justice in Iraq
In cooperation with the Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Unit,
University College London Institute of Child Health and
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children

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Abstracts

Ameliorating the effects of war and displacement on children

Women and children are not only the largest group of victims of modern warfare, they are also often deliberately targeted. Moved by the obvious effects of war on children, many altruistic people flock to give help, but too often that help is neither well integrated with local services nor is it evidence based.

The Children and War Foundation was established after the civil war in Yugoslavia with the express aim of developing evidence based approaches to helping large groups of children affected by war and natural disasters (see www.childrenandwar.org). This talk will describe the main effects of war and displacement on children and adolescents and present some lessons learned from current projects in Sri Lanka, Jordan and the UK.

The current situation of children in Iraq

The situation and condition of Iraqi children at present is one created by repression, war and sectarian fighting. This presentation will give an idea of the current situation of children and the work being undertaken to assist them within Iraq.

The effects of trauma on brain and behaviour

Trauma affects the functioning of the brain and thus human behaviour. This presentation will give a brief overview of how traumatic experiences interfere with cognition and behaviour leading to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The neural basis of PTSD and its long term consequences on children will be discussed.

Questions and discussions

Participants will be able to ask questions, give comments and provide recommendations for improving the life of children in post conflict Iraq.

Mini-bios

Professor William Yule

William Yule trained as a clinical psychologist at the Institute of Psychiatry and Maudsley Hospital in London and was for many years head of the clinical psychology services and Professor of Applied Child Psychology. He received his doctoral degree for his studies of specific reading retardation, part of the Isle of Wight epidemiological studies. He has published over 300 articles and 9 books on a wide range of topics in child psychology. He is Consultant Psychologist in the National and Specialist division of the Children's Directorate in the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust. He was co-chair of the SL&M/loP Research Ethics Committee.

He has researched into training parents of autistic children to use behavioural techniques; training teachers to use behavioural techniques in mainstream classrooms; treatment of school phobia; longitudinal studies of the epidemiology of children's disorders; the effects of lead on children's development; children's fears. He is a founder member of the Society for the Study of Behavioural Phenotypes, a society devoted to the better understanding of the genotype/phenotype link in certain mentally handicapping disorders.

For the past twenty years, he has been heavily involved in the study and treatment of PTSD in both adults and children. He has shown that PTSD is both a commoner and more chronic reaction in children and adolescents than had hitherto been suspected. Current research in PTSD includes studies of the buffering effects of social support; the relationship between causal attribution and degrees of distress in survivors; developing cognitive behavioural treatments for children and adolescents; five year follow up studies of child survivors; studies of emotional processing in survivors; studies of the stress reactions in unselected survivors of road traffic accidents.

Since the summer of 1993, he has been an advisor to UNICEF on its psychosocial programme for war affected children in former Yugoslavia and was Technical Director of a major programme to develop services for war affected children in Mostar in Bosnia. He is a member of the Board of the Foundation for Children and War, Bergen, Norway (www.childrenandwar.org). He has been active among British and

European PTSD researchers. He developed links with researchers in the countries of the former Soviet Union and together with colleagues in Gent and Leiden helped to set up training in clinical child psychology in the University of Kiev in the Ukraine. He is an active member of the UK Sri Lanka Trauma Group and recently helped to establish a mental health resource centre in Colombo as well as the first Masters course in Clinical Psychology at the University of Colombo.

He was elected to the Green Cross Foundation Academy of Traumatology in January 1998. He was appointed Honorary Consultant in Clinical Psychology to the Army in March 2000. He is also a member of the Defence Scientific Advisory Committee (DSAC). He was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award of the ISTSS in 2005. The Bill Yule Adolescent Unit at the Bethlem Royal Hospital was named in his honour in July 2005. He was awarded a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship to study the effects of the Tsunami on children, and more generally the mental health needs following complex emergencies. He was elected an Honorary Fellow of the British Psychological Society in March 2006. He was awarded the Aristotle prize of the European Federation of Psychology Associations in 2007.

He is a member of the European Federation of Psychology Associations' standing Committee on Crisis, Disasters and Trauma, as well as its British Psychological Society counterpart. He was a member of the NICE Guideline Development Group on PTSD. He was a member of the Department of Health Emergency Planning Guidance group on Children in Emergencies (2005/6).

[Faraneh Vargha-Khadem](#)

Professor Faraneh Vargha-Khadem completed her doctoral and post doctoral studies at the University of Massachusetts in the United States and McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She moved to London in 1983 to take a position at the Institute of Child Health and Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children where she has helped create the first academic department of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience in the UK, and its clinical counterpart, the Department of Clinical Neuropsychology.

Professor Vargha-Khadem's research and clinical work is focused on the cognitive and behavioural deficits of children with brain injury or disease with the goal of understanding how brain systems develop during childhood. She has been investigating developmental amnesia, genetic abnormalities resulting in speech and language disorders, and brain plasticity in children with epilepsy. She holds a personal chair in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London, and is also the head of her department. She was elected Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences in 2000, and has received a number of awards including the 2006 Jean Louis Signoret Prize for her contributions to genetics of behaviour.

[Rosa Mohammed Ali](#)

Rosa is a solicitor practicing in London. She is a member of the Iraqi Association Management Committee and a member of the Iraq Child Group and International Coordination for Gender Justice in Iraq.

[Venue](#)

The Institute of Child Health is close to Russell Square or King's Cross/St Pancras tube stations.



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