



Schizophrenia  
International  
Research  
Society

# SIRS Society News

## President's Letter



**Robin Murray,  
M.D., FRS.**

Since the term Schizophrenia was originally coined by Bleuler in 1911, this year we enter the second century of schizophrenia. We have learned a very great deal about the disorder, particularly in the last decade. So although it remains a puzzle, it certainly can no longer be regarded as a total enigma. Research will be crucial to filling in the remaining pieces of the puzzle and integrating them to make a coherent picture, and we at SIRS expect to play an important role in facilitating this.

I have been reflecting back on the accomplishments of the Society in 2011. The first regional meeting of the Society was held at the University of São Paulo, Brazil, in August. In the initial conference planning, we had planned for 150 participants and 50 poster presentations. Thanks to the outstanding efforts of Geraldo Busatto, Wagner Gattaz and the local committee members, nearly 450 researchers from throughout South America, North America and Europe attended the conference. Additionally, approximately 140 posters were presented. With the success of the SIRS South America Meeting, the Officers and Board of Directors are working to plan regional meetings in India and China in the coming years. Thus, just as economic power is shifting away from Europe and North America, research on schizophrenia is becoming much more global.

Our various committees have been toiling away to develop new programs and policies for the Society. The Awards Committee has raised funds for 3 new prizes which will be presented at the

SIRS Business Meeting in Florence. The Ethics Committee has developed a Financial Conflict of Interest Policy for SIRS, an important issue to keep members on the straight and narrow! The Publications Committee has helped to re-design the Society website. The Elections Committee identified a slate of outstanding candidates to lead the Society in the coming years. My thanks to all of them and to our administrative staff especially Lyn Sholl.

Plans for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Schizophrenia Research Conference in Florence are well underway. Indeed, the Program Committee, especially Jim Van Os and Dawn Velligan, have developed an outstanding scientific program. We have had a record number of oral and poster abstracts submitted this year, and in spite of the gloomy economic climate, we expect a record attendance making this the largest international conference on schizophrenia to date. The scientific quality is higher than ever and as a reflection of this, Philip Campbell, Editor in Chief of Nature, will deliver the keynote address. There have been a number of changes to this year's conference schedule including a fourth plenary session and evening workshops on Sunday and Tuesday. I am looking forward to an exciting and stimulating conference, and to meeting many old and not so old friends again.

Please feel free to contact myself or Lyn Sholl in the Executive Office at:

[Lhopmeyer@schizophreniaresearchsociety.org](mailto:Lhopmeyer@schizophreniaresearchsociety.org)  
with further suggestions for collaboration, improvement or indeed complaints.

# 3rd Biennial Schizophrenia International Research Conference

14-18 April 2012

The 3rd Biennial Schizophrenia International Research Society Conference will take place 14-18 April 2012, in Florence, Italy at the Firenze Fiera Congress Center. The meeting is jointly sponsored by Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and the Schizophrenia International Research Society.

The Organizing and Program Committees have worked hard to offer an excellent scientific program at this year's conference. New sessions have been added to this year's schedule. Four plenary sessions covering Psychological and Social Treatments, Genetics, Models from Immunology and Experimental Medicine and New Treatments will be offered. The Organizers accepted seven workshops for presentation on Sunday and Tuesday evenings. Response to abstract submission for oral and poster presentation was

outstanding this year. More than 1000 oral and poster abstracts were submitted for review.

The registration and hotel reservations website for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Schizophrenia International Research Society Conference is open. Please go to [Registration/Housing](#) to begin your conference registration. Members are required to include their member number into the registration system to receive the discounted registration fee. **The most significant conference registration discounts are available to 2011 and 2012 members of the Society.** If you were a member in 2011, renew your membership for 2012 to receive the most significant discounted registration fees. Visit: <http://www.schizophreniaresearchsociety.org> to renew your membership for 2012 and pay your dues, or join the Society.

**Make your registration and housing**

**arrangements prior to the early deadline of 14 March to receive a reduced registration fee.**

The Conference website will be updated regularly with new information, so check back often.



*"Italy, and the spring and first love all together should suffice to make the gloomiest person happy." --Bertrand Russell*

## Conference Details

We hope you are looking forward to visiting the beautiful city of Florence, Italy and attending an exceptional scientific meeting. Below is some information regarding the conference and the city of Florence.

- The 2012 Biennial Meeting will be held at **Firenze Fiera Congress and Exhibition Center** <http://www.firenze.fiera.it>. The registration and information desk will be at the Palazzo Entrance.
- Amerigo Vespucci Airport in Florence is 4 km from the city centre. Taxis can take you to the city center or the Ataf/Sita 'Viola in Bus' shuttle service. The shuttle connects the airport to the central railway station of Santa Maria Novella. Santa Maria Novella station is across the street from the Firenze Fiera Congress Center.
- One of the most renowned squares in Florence is *Piazza della Signoria*. Displaying an open-air sculpture exhibit, it is situated in the heart of the historic center. If you do not have time to visit the *Accademia Gallery* to view Michelangelo's *David*, you may see a reproduction of it among the piazza's many important statues. In addition to the beautiful art, you may also visit the medieval *Palazzo Vecchio*, seated directly on the piazza. Tour the palazzo's ornately decorated rooms and apartments

and then end with some casual dining at surrounding cafes and restaurants.

- If you find yourself to be an art historian at heart, then the *Uffizi Gallery* should be on your must see list in Florence. Home to the most extraordinary collection of Renaissance art in the world, it is the most visited museum in Italy.
- Most importantly, do not miss the finest piece of Italian architecture, *The Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore*. Brunelleschi's 15<sup>th</sup> century design adorns the Florence skyline with its massive dome, eight white ribs and beautiful terracotta tiles.
- Travelers arriving at Galileo Galilei airport in Pisa can take direct shuttle trains or buses to Santa Maria Novella railway station in Florence. Travel time is approximately one hour. The Firenze Fiera (conference center for the event) is just steps away from the station.
- For conference attendees arriving at Leonardo da Vinci airport in Rome, trains are available from the airport to Termini train station in Rome. From Termini train station, travelers can purchase tickets to Santa Maria Novella train station in Florence and arrive in approximately one hour, forty minutes. Train schedules are available at [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com).

- SIRS is working with Caldwell Travel to offer discounted airfares for the Biennial Meeting. Feel free to contact Javonna Williams. This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it - 615-327-2720 / 800-229-3344 at Caldwell Travel to book flights for the Schizophrenia International Research Society Conference.

- Both Satellite Meetings (IPRN and Cognition) will be held on 14 April 2012. Further information regarding registration and fees can be found on [www.schizophreniaconference.org](http://www.schizophreniaconference.org). The Cognition in Schizophrenia Satellite meeting will be held at the Boscolo Astoria Hotel in via del Giglio. The IPRN Satellite Meeting will be held at the Firenze Fiera Congress Center. **\*Please note that the Cognition Satellite Meeting changed dates from 19 April to 14 April\***

In case of cancellation, please contact NewTours at: [schizophrenia2012@newtours.it](mailto:schizophrenia2012@newtours.it). Notification of cancellation must be received by 14 March 2012 in order to receive a full refund less a €40,00 processing fee. Cancellations received after 14 March 2012 will not receive a refund.

## Call For Committee Memebers

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SIRS Members are invited and encouraged to serve on a committee for the coming term, April 2012 – April 2014. We hope you will consider donating your time and leadership skills to one of the many committees looking for volunteers. Please contact Lyn Sholl at:

[Lhopmayer@parthenonmanagementgroup.com](mailto:Lhopmayer@parthenonmanagementgroup.com) to volunteer and indicate your committee preference. The following committees are looking for member involvement:

**Awards Committee** - This committee will decide on annual scientific awards and scholarships for meeting attendance.

**Education Committee**: This committee focuses on broader issues of education other than those dealt within national and international scientific meetings. They will address the education of the public, press and professionals in clinical practice across cultures and internationally in the latest advances in schizophrenia research. A portion of their work will be devoted to the exchange of information to third-world, impoverished countries where obtaining new medications and knowledge regarding the disease is lacking.

**Ethics Committee** - This committee will address all ethical issues pertaining to schizophrenia research and develop guidelines for the field. From time to time ethical conduct issues may also arise about individual members and this committee will develop responses as needed.

**Finance Committee** - Composed of the treasurer and at least two other members, this committee will plan and implement fiscal procedures in the best interests of the Society and its members. The treasurer is authorized to execute all fiscal procedures when so directed by the Finance Committee in conjunction with the Executive Secretary or executive staff. The Finance Committee shall report to the Board at regular intervals, and a complete report on the Society's finances will be sent annually to all Officers and Board Members. The committee will consider the details of the budget that is prepared by the Treasurer and presented to the Board along with the Finance Committee's recommendations.

**Membership Committee** - This committee will review all new membership applications and decide on the appropriateness of each.

**Program Committee** – This committee will solicit proposals for the Biennial Conference, review the submissions for presentation and make decisions on the content of the conference.

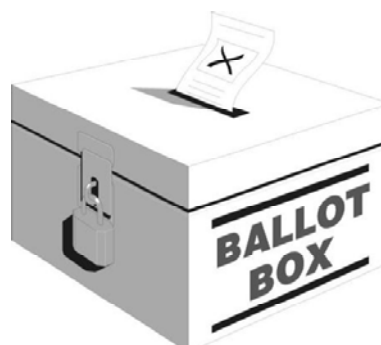
**Publications Committee**: This committee will act as a liaison with the journals affiliated with the Society and serve as advisors to the editors as needed. They will oversee announcements and other materials concerning the Society to be published in the journal. This would include special issues, meeting reports, abstract issues from meeting and any other information the committee sees as important for publication. This committee will also consider contractual arrangements with the journals and negotiate such contracts that will then require majority vote of the Executive Board for approval.



## Elections

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Thank you to the Elections Committee for identifying the slate of Officers and Board Members for the 2012 Society elections. An announcement of elected President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer and Board members will be made after the February 10 deadline for voting. Thank you to the Society members who voted in the elections, identifying the future leaders of the Society.



## SIRS Honorific Awards

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The first annual SIRS Honorific Awards will be presented during the Society Business Meeting on Monday, 16 April 2012. Award recipients will receive a waived conference registration. The three award categories this year are Rising Star, Outstanding Clinical/Community Research and Outstanding Basic Research. Response to the nominations from Society members was tremendous. The Awards Committee had a difficult time selecting one winner in each category from the out-

standing researchers nominated.

The Rising Star award is designated for early career researchers who are less than 40 years old by 18 April 2012 or within five years post-doc. The Outstanding Clinical/Community Research award will be given in recognition of an outstanding clinical/community contribution to schizophrenia research. Finally, the Outstanding Basic Research award will be given in recognition of an outstanding basic research contribution to schizophrenia re-

search. We thank everyone who participated and look forward to the unveiling of our prestigious winners in April.

## Membership

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It is a new year and time to renew your membership to Schizophrenia International Research Society if you haven't already done so. To renew your dues, please take time to visit: [www.schizophreniaresearchsociety.org](http://www.schizophreniaresearchsociety.org) and login with your username and password. After successful login, you will be able to access the Members-only section of the site where you will be able to renew your membership online, update your member profile and review your member benefits.

The Membership Committee instituted a new policy for new member applicants. Applicants for full membership are required to submit a letter by a Society member for consideration. Applicants will have the ability to upload the letter of recommendation with their CV, as well as view the detailed description of this new policy through the online application process.

Society members may be contacted by the Executive Office to write a letter of

recommendation for an applicant from the same region. Please consider this request as the Society grows as a global organization.



Schizophrenia  
International  
Research  
Society

## Contact Us

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The mission of the corporation as formed is to be a worldwide organization that aims to bring together researchers in schizophrenia and related disorders in order to:

1. Exchange the latest advances in research and facilitate the application of these findings to clinical practice.
  2. Facilitate international communication and collaboration in research.
  3. Promote educational programs to effectively disseminate new research findings related to schizophrenia, both in the scientific community and the lay public.
  4. Encourage the publication of research.
  5. Increase the public understanding of the personal, familial, and societal impact of schizophrenia.
  6. Support increased research funding for schizophrenia research around the world.
- Promote the highest scientific and ethical standards in research and its application in clinical psychiatric practice.

Visit us on the web [www.schizophreniaresearchsociety.org](http://www.schizophreniaresearchsociety.org) or Facebook to receive up to date information and connect with fellow members.



## SIRS South American Meeting—August 2011

The Schizophrenia International Research Society hosted the first regional meeting of the Society at the University Of São Paulo, Brazil, 5 – 7 August 2011. The meeting attracted more than 400 researchers from South America, the United States and Europe. The two day conference included Keynote addresses; plenary sessions and approximately 150 posters were displayed during the poster sessions. Plenary sessions included: “Incidence and Outcome of Schizophrenia in Latin America” presented by Paulo Menezes, “Genomics of Schizophrenia: Critical Review of Current Approaches” presented by Lynn DeLisi and “Factors Determining Brain Tissue Loss in Schizophrenia” presented by Rene Kahn.

Thank you to Geraldo Busatto, Wagner Gattaz, the Local Organizing and South American Advisory Committees for their time and work on the SIRS South America Meeting.

