



Symposium

# *Interdisciplinary Ambitions: Women's Mental Health from History to Neurobiology*

Mental health problems are increasing in prevalence in the Western world, placing mental health promotion, mental disorder prevention, and related interventions as major priorities for the society. The increase in mental health problems is particularly pronounced among women during the reproductive years.

Brain development is at the core of our understanding of mental health problems. The human brain is influenced by genetically determined sex differences and early postnatal experiences and is evolutionary adapted to withstand a range of environmental demands. Sex differences in brain function has gained increased interest over the past ten years. However, there is still a paucity of information on the specific characteristics of the female brain, and how it adapts to reproductive challenges like puberty, pregnancy and menopause. The lack of knowledge affects our understanding of the female brain function and our ability to distinguish functional adaptations from disease states, all of which have potential consequences for mental health and socialization. At the same time, our understanding of mental health problems in women must also consider women's role in society, the expectations and societal norms they face and the experience and definition of mental illnesses.

This interdisciplinary symposium will bring together scientists at the forefront of neuroscience, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, humanities and neuroendocrinology to highlight major advances and challenges in the field of women's mental health and suggest future avenues for research. Contributions will be made by the newly established Centre for Women's Mental Health during the Reproductive Lifespan (WOMHER), where these research questions are in focus.

Organizing committee:

**ERIKA COMASCO, LISA EKSELIUS, ANDREAS FRICK, DAN LARHAMMAR,  
ALKISTIS SKALKIDOU, AGNETA SKOOG SVANBERG, INGER SUNDSTRÖM POROMAA**

23-24 May, 2022

Venue: the Thunberg Lecture Hall, SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala.

Pre-registration is required.

The number of seats is limited and seats will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.

Please register by 29 April, 2022 at the latest via:

[www.swedishcollegium.se/Natvet/WOMHER/WOMHER\\_registration.html](http://www.swedishcollegium.se/Natvet/WOMHER/WOMHER_registration.html)

This is an event of the SCAS Natural Sciences Programme (Human Brains and Societies).

It is a collaboration between *Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS)* and Uppsala University's Centre for *Women's Mental Health during the Reproductive Lifespan (WOMHER)*.

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## Monday, 23 May

### Welcome & Introduction

08:45

Registration and coffee/tea

09:15

Welcome & Introduction

**CHRISTINA GARSTEN**, Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS), Sweden

**LISA EKSELIUS** and **INGER SUNDSTRÖM POROMAA**, Uppsala University, Sweden

### Theme 1: Evolutionary Perspectives on Sex

09:30

**MARLENE ZUK**, University of Minnesota, USA

*Sexual Selection, Mate Choice, and Animal Communication*

+ Q & A (5 min)

10:15

**INGRID AHNESJÖ**, Uppsala University, Sweden

*Animal Parental Care Costs and Brain Sizes in a Fishy Perspective*

+ Q & A (5 min)

11:00

Panel discussion

Moderator: **DAN LARHAMMAR**, Uppsala University, Sweden

12:00

Lunch break

### Theme 2: Lights on Mood, Emotion and Context

13:15

**FRANÇOIS GEORGES**, Université de Bordeaux, France

*Neurocircuitry Analysis of Emotion*

+ Q & A (5 min)

14:00

**ÅSA WALLÉN-MACKENZIE**, Uppsala University, Sweden

*Revealing Brain Heterogeneity*

+ Q & A (5 min)

14:45

Panel discussion

Moderator: **ANNA QVARNSTRÖM**, Uppsala University, Sweden

15:15

Coffee/tea break (the Thunberg Dining Room, SCAS)

### Theme 3: Science and the Gendered Psyche: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives

15:45

**ELIZABETH LUNBECK**, Harvard University, USA

*The Gendered Psyche of Borderline Personality Disorder*

+ Q & A (5 min)

16:30

**LISA KÄLL**, Stockholm University, Sweden

*Intercorporealities of Sexual Difference*

+ Q & A (5 min)

17:15

Panel discussion

Moderator: **MAJA BODIN**, Uppsala University, Sweden

## Tuesday, 24 May

### Theme 4: Women's Mental Health: Gender and Beyond

09:15

**JENNY DOUGLAS**, Open University, UK

*The Politics of Black Women's Mental Health and Wellbeing in the UK*

+ Q & A (5 min)

10:00

Coffee/tea break (the Thunberg Dining Room, SCAS)

10:30

**ANN E ROGERS**, Southampton University, UK

*Beyond Gender: Intersectionality and Mental Health Inequalities*

+ Q & A (5 min)

11:15

Panel discussion

Moderator: **HANNAH BRADBY**, Uppsala University, Sweden

12:30

Lunch break

### Theme 5: Developmental and Neurobiological Aspects of Anxiety Disorders

13:30

**ANDREW S FOX**, University of California, Davis, USA

*Towards an Understanding of Anxious Temperament*

+ Q & A (5 min)

14:15

**TOMAS FURMARK**, Uppsala University, Sweden

*The Neurobiology of Social Anxiety Disorder*

+ Q & A (5 min)

15:00

Panel discussion

Moderators: **ANDREAS FRICK** and **MATS FREDRIKSON**, Uppsala University, Sweden

15:45

Coffee/tea break (the Thunberg Dining Room, SCAS)

## Theme 6: Neuroimaging Sex and Sex Hormones

16:15

**ANAT BIEGON**, Stony Brook University, USA

*Imaging Aromatase in the Brain of Men and Women*

+ Q & A (5 min)

17:00

**IVANKA SAVIC**, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, and University of California, Los Angeles, USA

*Gender Dysphoria in the Brain*

+ Q & A (5 min)

17:45

Panel discussion

Moderators: **ERIKA COMASCO** and **INGER SUNDSTRÖM POROMAA**, Uppsala University, Sweden

18:30

Concluding remarks