**European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association: Proposal for a Workshop/Event**

**Organiser(s) name, affiliation and contact details**

Dr Sarah Myers, University College London

Dr Abigail Page, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

In collaboration with: Dr Emily Emmott, University College London

**Title of proposed event**

Who cares? Introducing evolutionary approaches to caregiving and mother-infant health

**Dates**

Friday 9th November 2019

**Venue/location**

University College London

**Description of event** (maximum 500 words)

We propose an interdisciplinary workshop to promote and integrate evolutionary approaches into the sphere of maternal and child health. The workshop will actively encourage cross-disciplinary discussion and collaboration, as well as wider public engagement with evolutionary anthropological approaches to caregiving and mother-infant health.

In evolutionary anthropology, the importance of allomothers (non-maternal caregivers) for maternal and infant fitness is widely acknowledged. However, in public health and non-evolutionary social sciences support is often poorly defined, with a strong nuclear family bias regarding caregiving. This workshop will bridge this disciplinary gap by facilitating dialogue between evolutionary anthropologists and those with overlapping interests in other fields, such as medical anthropologists, sociologists, and public health researchers.

*Workshop plan:*

The workshop will consist of a series of research presentations, discussions and activities focusing on caregiving and mother-infant health. From our experience, the greatest challenges in interdisciplinary settings are theoretical misconceptions and language barriers. By opening the workshop with theoretical overviews, we will establish common ground and ensure meaningful discussions.

The presentations and discussions will be followed by small-group activities, focusing on (1) identifying ‘research gaps’ where interdisciplinary collaboration could be productive and (2) how to communicate across disciplines (what are the misconceptions, how can we address them, etc.).

The workshop will be followed by a wider public engagement event with a keynote speaker (Professor Rebecca Sear). To widen reach of the keynote event, we hope to link up with the London Evolutionary Research Network, which is a student-run organisation. Workshop participants will also be invited to present research posters, which will be available for public viewing. This will also ensure all attendees have a forum to discuss their own research, facilitating collaboration.

Our provisional workshop plan is outlined below:

|  |
| --- |
| 10:30 Welcome  11:00 Talks & discussions  12:30 Lunch  13:30 Talks & discussions  15:00 Break  15:30 Small group activities  17:00 Pre-talk reception with research posters  17:45 Keynote speaker  18:45 Post-talk ‘buffet dinner’ with research posters |

*Attendees:*

The workshop presenters will be ~50% evolutionary social scientists and ~50% non-evolutionary researchers. We will encourage a diverse range of workshop participants researching caregiving and/or mother-infant health, and it will be open to EHBEA members.

The public keynote event will be open to all. We will also specifically invite past participants of our research projects, namely mothers who took part in our survey on caregiving and breastfeeding, thereby serving as a way to feedback and engage with our survey participants.

*Impact & outputs:*

As early career researchers, the core aim of the workshop is to break out of our ‘disciplinary bubbles’ and build a wider collaborative network in the UK. At the same time, we will promote and evidence the usefulness of an evolutionary approach to non-evolutionary colleagues and the wider public.

To maximise the reach and openness, we will ‘live tweet’ the workshop and request that all talks are made available publicly. We will also use this workshop as a foundation for an interdisciplinary review paper on caregiving and maternal and child health, and soundboard the creation of an Evolutionary Mother-Infant Health Network with colleagues.

**Audience expected** (estimated number and background)

Workshop: 20 to 25 people, including 8 speakers. (Note: From our experience, 20-25 is the upper bound of meaningful engagement across the group for an interactive workshop.)

Evening talk – 50+ people (Note: The evening talk will be open to the public, on a first-come-first-served basis. We anticipate booking a lecture theatre suitable for around 100 people.)

**Suggested speakers, if included in event**

We will have ~ 9 speakers from evolutionary and non-evolutionary disciplines. The following speakers have either confirmed or informally agreed to speak at our event. (Note - We are aware that our line-up of speakers is clearly not gender balanced. This reflects the strong gender bias in the field of caregiving and mother-infant health. To address this bias, we will encourage male participation & will continue to approach male speakers.)

*Keynote speaker:*

Prof Rebecca Sear, Professor of Population and Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Department of Population Health (confirmed – talk on evolutionary approaches to childcare)

*‘Evolutionary’ speakers:*

Dr Sarah Myers, Honorary Research Associate, UCL Department of Anthropology (confirmed – talk on the influence of support on mother-infant bonding)

Dr Emily Emmott, Research Associate, UCL Institute of Education (confirmed – talk on the influence of variations in type and source of support on breastfeeding longevity)

Dr Abigail Page, Research Fellow, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Department of Population Health (confirmed – talk on resilience and flexibility in maternal support networks and child health in hunter-gatherers)

*‘Non-Evolutionary’ speakers:*

Dr Charlotte Faircloth, Lecturer in the Sociology of Gender, UCL Institute of Education (approached – talk on intensive parenting in the UK)

Dr Marina Daniele, Midwife Researcher, King’s College London Department of Women and Children’s Health (approached – talk on the importance of fathers in maternal postnatal health)

**Draft budget** (to include both estimated expenditure and income)

Below is the draft budget, in GBP. Venue hire and stationary will be covered by UCL. We will seek additional support from UCL and LSHTM.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Category** | **Number** | **People** | **Amount (£)** | **Item total** |
| Reception drinks | Food and drink | 1 | 50 | 1.5 | 75 |
| Buffet drinks | Food and drink | 1 | 25 | 3 | 75 |
| Buffet dinner | Food and drink | 1 | 25 | 10 | 250 |
| Reception snacks | Food and drink | 1 | 50 | 1 | 50 |
| Lunch | Food and drink | 1 | 25 | 11.2 | 280 |
| Morning coffee/tea | Food and drink | 1 | 25 | 1.2 | 30 |
| Afternoon coffee/tea | Food and drink | 1 | 25 | 1.2 | 30 |
| Morning snack | Food and drink | 2 | 25 | 0.25 | 12.5 |
| Afternoon snack | Food and drink | 2 | 25 | 0.25 | 12.5 |
| Water, orange juice etc. | Food and drink | 3 | 25 | 0.3 | 22.5 |
| Room hire | General | 3 | - | 0 | 0 |
| Stationary for group activity | General | 1 | - | 0 | 0 |
| Transport speakers | Transport | - | 3 | 75 | 225 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | **TOTAL £** | 1062.5 |
|  |  |  |  | **TOTAL Euro** | 1190 |

**Benefit to EHBEA membership**

EHBEA members, along with others, will be eligible to attend either the workshop and/or evening talk.

The primary goal of the workshop is the general promotion and integration of evolutionary approaches into other disciplines; in doing so, we will be highlighting the research of EHBEA members (for instance Dr Sarah Myers, Dr Abigail Page and Professor Rebecca Sear) and introducing the society to non-evolutionary scholars.

A further aim is to use this workshop as a platform to start of longer-term network of researchers who can contact and communicate with policy makers and practitioners in the UK, led by a group of early career researchers (Dr’s Myers, Emmott, and Page). We will be soundboarding an Evolutionary Mother-Infant Health Network, which we envisage EHBEA members being integral to.

**Confirmation that the event organiser(s) is a current member of EHBEA**

Dr Sarah Myers is a current member of EHBEA – User ID XXXX

Dr Abigail Page is also a current member of EHBEA – User ID XXXX

Dr Emily Emmott is not a current member of EHBEA, but will be providing no-cost support to organise the workshop.

***Please also attach a brief (2-page) CV for each organiser.***

Please return the completed proposal by email to the EHBEA Secretary ([ehbea.secretary@googlemail.com](mailto:ehbea.secretary@googlemail.com)) by 5pm GMT on the relevant date (deadlines: 1st August and 1st March each year).