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Short articles (around 600 words), news, tips, quotes, cartoons and other contributions of particular relevance to students are most welcome. Send to: Nicola Hills, c/o the Society's Leicester office. E-mail: Nicola_Hills@hotmail.com

An insightful day

LIZ MOON (University College Winchester) reports from the BPS Student Members Group conference in Manchester, and wonders why more students weren't there to enjoy it.

THERE was a rather disappointing turnout to the annual BPS Student Members Group conference this year; luckily this did not dampen the spirits of those who did attend and those who were presenting. After a rather shaky start, courtesy of the wonderful technology everyone loves to hate (computers), Keith Chrystie (Chair of the SMG) enthusiastically welcomed everyone and introduced what was to be an insightful day of student presentations.

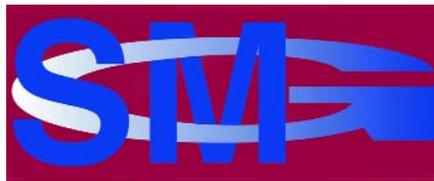
The first speaker was third-year Nazira Begum from University College London, who spoke eloquently about her research on ethnic differences between the health beliefs and attitudes of Bangladeshis and their British white counterparts. Nazira found that the Bangladeshi group showed poorer health behaviour patterns in comparison to the British white group, and attitudes to health between the two ethnic groups also differed. She suggested that the results of this study may have beneficial effects in developing a culturally sensitive health programme.

Susan Gibson, a second-year at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, examined whether an association exists between parental disciplinary practices and retrospective reports of bullying. Susan found that significantly more victims of bullying reported experiencing grounding as a disciplinary practice as a child, suggesting the possible role that parental disciplinary procedures may have over a child's probability of becoming a victim of bullying.

Next to the podium was an enthusiastic Samantha Perera (University College London) presenting her final-year project on the cross-cultural differences of British and Sri Lankan lay theories of schizophrenia. She highlighted that Sri Lankans showed more negative and uninformed attitudes and beliefs about schizophrenia than the British, and they favoured superstitious, parental and sociological causes to explain its

development, whereas the British favoured more scientific explanations.

The final speaker of the morning session was third-year student Sara King from Teesside University on the effects of age and incentive on prospective memory (remembering to perform an intended action at a future time) and the relationship



between prospective and retrospective memory performances in children. Sara found age effects for time-based prospective memory and incentive (time-based incentive – ask for a sticker; time-based no incentive – shut the door), as well as for event-based (response to a target picture) prospective memory and retrospective memory. Further findings included a significant relationship between event- and time-based prospective memory performance. From this study she suggested the importance of incorporating incentives when developing teaching methods.

After lunch Tim Moss (University College London) welcomed everyone back with a presentation on his final-year project on the subject of implicit learning (learning independent of awareness) and explicit knowledge (awareness of knowledge) in nonlinear judgemental control tasks, such as learning to steer a boat (working out the relationship between the turn of the wheel and how much it moves). Tim's results indicated an implicit–explicit dissociation and implied that a similar learning process occurs in nonlinear systems as it does in linear systems. Tim also suggested that learning transfer is not the key to bridging the implicit–explicit gap.

Hazel McMurtrie of Glasgow Caledonian University spoke expressively about her research entitled 'Inhibition

of recall and recognition for scenes: A comparison of younger and older adults'. She found that older adults were poorer on recall than on recognition in comparison to younger adults. With previous research suggesting that ageing brings a deterioration of cognitive performance with deficits to episodic memory, the findings indicate implications for the accuracy of older adults' eyewitness testimony.

Everyone was very excited about the final presentation of the afternoon – invited speaker Dr Cynthia McVey, the featured psychologist on the reality-television programme *Castaway*, discussing psychology and the media. Cynthia provided a very upbeat informative talk to end the SMG conference, especially with her personal stories and experiences. The main focus of the presentation was on ethics within the media, or lack of it! Cynthia explained that individuals who choose to get involved with the media, particularly reality-television programmes, inevitably lose their privacy and confidentiality, as do their family and friends. Cynthia now insists that participants complete a specific form detailing the possible implications arising from taking part in such programmes.

Unfortunately, the SMG conference seemed to fall short of being spectacular this year, mainly due to the lack of student attendance. But it was great to see those students who did make the effort to present and share their work, a big Well done! to you all. I hope that 2006 will bring with it more student support and make what was an interesting event into a fantastic event.

What are your views on the benefits or otherwise of conference attendance? What would encourage you to attend future events? E-mail us on psychologist@bps.org.uk, or post your views on our discussion forum at www.thepsychologist.org.uk, where you can also seek work experience and information from the psychological community.