CAS Dissertation Prize 2015

Each year CAS awards a prize for the best dissertation. One dissertation is nominated per department. This year the jury consisted of Jolien van der Graaf (Adolescent Development), Regina van den Eijnden (Youth in Changing Cultural Contexts), Marjolein Verhoeven (Development and Treatment of Psychosocial Problems) and Judith Dubas (Developmental Psychology: Social and Personality Development).

A number of criteria are used for assessing the dissertation and each member uses these to determine a rank ordering of the dissertations. These criteria are: the scientific quality of the research, the innovative character of the research, the scientific importance and/or the societal impact, the coherence of the dissertation as a whole. An average is made of the rankings and the dissertation with the lowest average (rank) is the winner. It should be noted that no committee member rates the dissertation submitted from his or her home department.

Three of the four dissertations submitted focused on adolescents: one examined the development of anxiety, another focused on the role of parents and peers in adolescent sexual development, and a third focused on the drinking behavior of at-risk adolescents. The fourth focused on school-aged children’s self-esteem and narcissism in relation to parenting practices.

The quality of the dissertations was extremely high. We were able to identity a front runner but for the first time since we began this award there was a 3-way tie for second place. The committee felt that all 3 dissertations deserved receiving an honorable mention.

Thus, the three dissertations receiving an honorable mention are:

Daphne van de Bongardt for her dissertation entitled: Developing adolescent sexuality in context: Relations with parents and peers. (Development and Treatment of Psychosocial Problems)

Stefanie Nelemans for her dissertation: Adolescent anxiety: Development, individual vulnerability, and social relationships. (Adolescent Development)

Margot Peeters for her dissertation: Rethink your drink...: the bidirectional relationship between automatic and controlled processes and the development of drinking behavior in at-risk adolescents. (Youth in Changing Cultural Contexts)

The winner of this year’s CAS dissertation prize is awarded to Eddie Brummelman for his dissertation entitled: I’m incredible—or am I? On the socialization of fragile self-views in children. (Cum Laude) Developmental Psychology


The dissertation, included eight empirical articles and a book chapter that focus on the development of children’s self views with a particular focus on the role parents play in socializing either strong or fragile self views in their children. Self views is an umbrella term for narcissism and self-esteem.
This dissertation was chosen based on its

(a) high scientific quality (as reflected in the number of publications in top-tier research journals, the outstanding reviews received from international scholars recommending the dissertation for cum laude (which was awarded), the use of a multi-method, multi-informant longitudinal and multi-study experimental designs.

(b) The innovative character of the research with its focus on: (1) parental overvaluation of their children, leading to the development of a new instrument to measure this construct (2) the longitudinal demonstration that parent overvaluation of their children leads to the development of narcissism while lack of warmth leads to lower self-esteem, and (3) unique experimental manipulations of socialization practices (such as praise) which demonstrated that specific parenting behaviors aimed to increase self-esteem in children can inadvertently exacerbate fragility of self-views and lead to maladaptive social behavior.

(c) The scientific and societal impact of the work. The scientific community acknowledged the originality of Brummelman’s work, resulting in invitations to cooperate from leading scholars (e.g. Dweck, Walton). The research also received an extremely high level of media attention, sparking debate about current parenting practices. Discussions appeared in media such as The Independent, Wall Street Journal, Wired, Huffington Post, BBC Radio, Science Daily, Psychology Today, Dutch national newspapers Trouw and NRC, and numerous Dutch Magazines.

(d) As a package the dissertation reflects a high level of scholarship reflected in breadth, depth and innovativeness and the development of promising research line.

**Dissertation Award Submissions 2015**

**Adolescent Development**


**Development and Treatment of Psychosocial Problems**


**Social and Personality development**


**Youth in Changing Cultural Contexts**