



COLLOQUIA TREVERENSIA

Dr. Melanie Noel University of Calgary (Canada)

Remembering the pain of childhood. Development, impact, and modification of children's pain memories

12. Juni 2019 – 16-18 Uhr am Wissenschaftspark (Raum W4.07)



Melanie Noel, PhD, RPsych is an Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Calgary (Alberta, Canada). She directs the Alberta Children's Pain Research Lab at the Alberta Children's Hospital. Dr. Noel's expertise is on children's memories for pain and co-occurring mental health issues and pediatric chronic pain. She published conceptual models of children's pain memory development, co-occurring PTSD and chronic pain, and fear-avoidance (80 peer-reviewed papers, H index = 23).

In recognition of her contributions to advancing knowledge of the psychological aspects of children's pain, Dr. Noel received early career awards from the International Association for the Study of Pain, the Canadian Pain and American Pain Societies, the Canadian Psychological Association, and the Society of Pediatric Psychology.

Abstract: From the first days of birth, infants can form memories of pain. Once formed, these memories play a powerful role in shaping future pain and health care experiences. As children acquire language and their explicit memory system develops, these memories become constructed and reconstructed in their interactions with others, and particularly for young children, in their interactions with parents.

Memory is not like a tape recorder. Rather these memories are highly susceptible to distortion. Children who develop negative biases in memory (i.e., they recall more pain than they initially experienced) are at risk for developing fears and avoidance of pain and health care, and are also at risk for pain transitioning from an acute to chronic state. Moreover, emerging research suggests that brain regions associated with memory are implicated in the chronic pain state in youth.

Dr. Noel will describe a program of research that is establishing factors implicated in the development of children's memories for pain, the role of pain memories in future pain experiences, and the development of a parent-led psychological intervention to reframe children's pain memories to buffer against the development of memory biases and lead to better pain outcomes in the future.