

## Brain Matters 3: Values at the Crossroads of Neurology, Psychiatry, and Psychology

October 24-25, 2012; Cleveland, Ohio

Symposium Organizers: Paul J Ford, PhD & Imad Najm, MD, PhD

Brain Matters 3 follows in the tradition of the two previous Brain Matters conferences in fostering further development in the field of NeuroEthics. Although abstracts will be elicited for presentations on a broad spectrum of NeuroEthics Research, the primary themes of the plenary talks for the conference address ethical dilemmas in the treatment and research for conditions with neurological symptomatology but that are without identifiable biological correlates/causes. The conditions of interest are often framed as medically unexplained symptoms (MUS), non-specific etiologies (NoS), or purely psychological. These diagnoses include, but are not limited to, chronic pain disorders, psychogenic movement disorders, conversion disorders, post traumatic stress disorder, and fibromyalgia. The complexities of suffering and disability experienced by individuals with these conditions are significant; including exposure to dangerous and futile treatments. Among clinicians, disagreement continues over which aspects of these conditions are “all in one’s head,” either literally or figuratively. Hidden value assumptions about causation permeate research studies and clinical decisions, and effect underlying treatment and care of patients. These assumptions have significant influence on the obligations, roles, and entitlements for patients and health care providers. Patients who suffer from these conditions are “orphaned” by specialties and largely ignored in bioethics discussions. Research abstracts will be solicited for oral as well as poster presentations.

### **Special Non-Epileptic Seizure Track:**

Psychogenic non-epileptic seizures (PNES) constitute a major unaddressed challenge to our healthcare system. On average, these patients carry an epilepsy misdiagnosis for seven years prior to being identified as PNES and are exposed to high levels of anti-epileptic medications during this period. Given that *Brain Matters 3* will overlap with the *21st International Epilepsy Symposium*, a dedicated PNES ethics sub-theme will occur on Day 1 of *Brain Matters 3* to take advantage of the crossover audience.

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### **Conference Plenary Topics:**

- Patients’ Perspectives on Medically Unexplained Symptoms
- Medically Unexplained Symptoms: Biological and Cultural
- Non-Epileptic Seizures, Communication, and Ethics
- Are we assuming the results in biological causation of involuntary movements? (TMS/PET/MRI)
- Ethical Challenges in PTSD and TBI in the military context
- Cross-Cultural Understandings of Seizures

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### **Invited Faculty**

Lisa Andermann  
University of Toronto

Siri Hustvedt  
International Author

Markus Reuber  
University of Sheffield (UK)

Grant Gillett  
University of Otago (New Zealand)

W. Curt LaFrance  
Brown University

Col. E. “Cam” Ritchie  
US Army

Mark Hallett  
Human Motor Control Section, NIH

Carmen Paradis  
Cleveland Clinic

Dylan Wint  
Cleveland Clinic

Tatiana Falcone  
Cleveland Clinic