

## The History of IAWMH: How It All Began and Where We're Going...

The 1st World Congress on Women's Mental Health was held in Berlin in March 2001. It was organized by Dr Mario Lanczik, under the auspices of the Section on Women's Mental Health of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), the Marcé Society and other reputed organizations. At the event, a meeting was held to discuss the formation of an international organization which would focus on the promotion of women's mental health.

During this meeting, it was observed that most organizations that were focused on women's mental health were predominantly governed by male leadership. While discussing the name, mission and purpose of this proposed organization, some of the discussion focused on the need for women leaders for the organization. After much debate an interim Executive Committee was appointed consisting of Uriel Halbreich (President), Donna Stewart (Vice President), Marta Rondon (Secretary), Teri Pearlstein (Treasurer) and Meir Steiner (Journal Editor), and it was decided that the 2nd World Congress would take place in 2004 in Washington DC. In Oct 2001, the International Association for Women's Mental Health (IAWMH) was incorporated in the USA, and work began on developing the Constitution and by-laws of the Association. The initial drafts were criticized for being too narrow in their scope, so a comprehensive, multidimensional Constitution and set of by-laws were written, which were approved at the 2nd World Congress on Women's Mental Health. The Constitution ensured that the leadership and the committees had 51% female representation.

There have been eight Congresses since, the most recent being the 9th World Congress on Women's Mental Health in Maastricht, The Netherlands in 2022. Each congress has a host of lectures, symposia and other activities centered around contemporary issues of women's mental health and wellbeing. Other than in Africa, the conferences have been held in all other continents and have succeeded in bringing women's mental health into the forefront in that region. They pursue their mission through the promotion of research in the field of women's mental health, collaboration with advocacy groups working in this field, organization of the World Congress in order to build their network with organizations concerned with women's mental health, and creating awareness through workshops and other media (print and electronic). As is evident from the list below, the elected leaders and office bearers of the association have been from all parts of the world in keeping with its global relevance.

### **Presidents** (including current President and President-elect)

2001-2004 **Uriel Halbreich**, MD (USA)  
2004-2008 **Donna Stewart**, CM, MD, FRCPC (Canada)  
2008-2011 **Susan Kornstein**, MD (USA)  
2011-2013 **Anita Riecher-Rossler**, MD PhD (Switzerland)  
2013-2015 **Marta Rondon**, MD (Peru)  
2015-2017 **Helen Herrman**, MD, FRANZCP, FPH, FAFPHM (Australis)  
2017-2019 **Jayashri Kulkarni** AM, MBBS MPM FRANZCP PhD FAHMS (Australia)  
2019-2022 **Florence Thibaut** M.D., Ph.D. (France)  
2022-2025 **Prabha S. Chandra** MD, FRCPE, FRCPsych, FAMS (India)  
2025-2027 **Judith Usall i Rodi **, MD (Spain)

### **Chronology of the World Congress on Women's Mental Health**

1 <sup>st</sup> Berlin, Germany – 2001	Future Congresses:
2 <sup>nd</sup> Washington DC, USA – 2004	10 <sup>th</sup> Bangalore, India – 2025
3 <sup>rd</sup> Melbourne, Australia – 2008	11 <sup>th</sup> Barcelona, Spain – 2027
4 <sup>th</sup> Madrid, Spain – 2011	
5 <sup>th</sup> Lima, Peru – 2013	
6 <sup>th</sup> Tokyo, Japan – 2015	
7 <sup>th</sup> Dublin, Ireland – 2017	
8 <sup>th</sup> Paris, France – 2019	
9 <sup>th</sup> Maastricht, Netherlands – 2022	

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