



## New European studies show Qld parenting program

Two new European studies show how the University of Queensland's Triple P – Positive Parenting Program can treat childhood depression and tame out-of-control teenagers.

The findings of the independent Belgian and Dutch research projects will be presented at **Helping Families Change**, an international parenting conference at the University of Queensland **on Wednesday February 18 and Thursday February 19**.

The Helping Families Change Conference brings together more than 180 experts, scholars, practitioners and government executives from countries including the US, Canada, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Japan, Sweden, New Zealand and Australia.

In the Belgian study, conducted at the youth mental health unit at the University of Antwerp, mothers who had a child receiving psychiatric care (for conditions including depression and anxiety) completed an eight-week Group Triple P program, in addition to their child's usual treatment.

Researchers Dr Dirk Deboutte and Dr Inge Glazemakers found that providing parenting support to the mothers significantly improved the emotional states of their children when compared to children receiving only standard psychiatric care. Fifty percent of children were found to have improved conduct and emotional problems.

The Dutch research into teens was carried out by the Trimbos Institute, the Netherlands' national mental health and addiction awareness foundation. Group Teen Triple P was delivered to parents of teenagers considered "at risk" – i.e. with severe behavioural problems and in extreme conflict with their parents.

Trimbos Institute researcher Dr Ferry Goossens found the parenting program reduced by between 25 and almost 50 percent the number of teens with clinically recognised problems with conduct, peer relationships, emotions, pro-social behaviour and hyperactivity. For example, the number of teens with conduct behavioural problems dropped from 55 percent to 35 percent, while those with hyperactivity decreased from 39 percent to 29 percent.

Dr Matt Sanders, Triple P founder and Director of the Parenting and Family Support Centre, University of Queensland, said the studies were the first to scientifically test Triple P's impact on childhood mental illness and on teenagers at the extreme end of the behaviour spectrum.

"These results add to the growing body of evidence that shows Triple P works with a wide range of families, across cultures and settings and has far reaching positive effects."