



APRIL 2003

SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC AND PERINATAL EPIDEMIOLOGIC RESEARCH

President's Corner

The 16th Annual SPER Meeting, to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, on June 10-11th 2003, is just around the corner. We have selected 104 abstracts for presentation, covering all aspects of our field. Many thanks to Russ Kirby and Mary Hediger, as well as to all the reviewers for having evaluated so many abstracts in a record time.

The meeting will start with a Panel Discussion on the NIH-funded networks performing randomized trials. On the second day, the keynote address will be presented by Dr. Curtis Meinert, Director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Clinical Trials, and will be followed by an exciting oral session of selected papers focused on randomized controlled trials.

Our objective is to simulate a debate about the place of randomized controlled trials in epidemiologic research, and the role of epidemiologists in the team performing trials. However, this will of course not be the only theme of the meeting. The vast majority of the presentations will be about observational studies, and we are very excited to have received original, innovative, and high quality contributions.

We are continuing to build bridges with other organizations, and have recently appointed Jennifer Zeitlin as Liaison with the European Perinatal Epidemiology Research Network.

I would like to thank the entire Executive Committee for the superb work they have done to prepare our meeting. And thanks again to all SPER members for having submitted so many outstanding abstracts!

See you in Atlanta!

Pierre Buekens



Sixteenth Annual Meeting Atlanta, Georgia

Our 2003 meeting will take place June 10-11th at the Marriott Marquis, Atlanta, Georgia. All of our sessions will be held in the Imperial Ballroom. Be prepared for hot weather but as always the hotel will be colder!



The meeting will at 6 pm with a panel discussion on the different NIH networks

followed by a reception and poster session similar to previous years. Information concerning registration and hotel booking are now available at our web site www.sper.org.

The preliminary program for the meeting can be found starting on page 3 of the newsletter.

We would like to thank all of our abstract reviewers, they include: Melissa Adams, Cande Ananth, R.J. Berry, Germaine Buck, Suzan Carmichael, Jimmy Collins, Mike Cooperstock, Elena Fuentes-Afflick, Mary Hediger, Wendy Hellerstedt, Howard Hoffman, Claudia Holtzman, Russell Kirby, Mark Klebanoff, Michael S. Kramer, L.H. Lumey, Pauline Mendola, Mike O'Shea, Jennifer Parker, Dona Schneider, Pat Shiono, Joe Stanford, and Nedra Whitehead.

Vote For Your Next President And Member-At- Large

On page 6 of the newsletter you will find the 2003 ballot for officers. Please exercise your right to vote. The Nominations Committee works hard to recruit individuals that are representative of the membership and that will serve us well.

New Address for the American Office of the Journal of Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology

As of February 17, 2003 the new mailing address will be:
Drs. John and Michele Kiely
Office of Analysis & Epidemiology

National Center for Health Statistics
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
3311 Toledo Road, Room 6418
Hyattsville, MD 20782

MCH Epidemiology Awards and Meeting

SPER is participating in the Coalition for Excellence in MCH Epidemiology, and invites members to consider making nominations for the 2003 awards. Awards are given in four general categories: Advancing Knowledge, Effective Practice, Outstanding Leadership, and Young Professional Achievement. Details concerning the awards and the nomination process can be found at <http://www.citymatch.org/citymatch/mchepiawards.htm>, and members can also contact Russell Kirby at rkirby@uab.edu or 205-934-2985 for more information.

Ninth Annual MCH Epidemiology Conference will be held in December 2003. Those interested in submitting abstracts for the Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology conference should consult the website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdrh/>. The conference, attended primarily by MCH researchers and professionals at the state, local, and federal levels and in academia, has become the largest annual gathering of MCH epidemiologists in the United States. The deadline for abstracts is May 5, 2003. Contact Russell Kirby, rkirby@uab.edu or 205-934-2985, or CDC staff as indicated on the website, for more information.

**Preliminary Program
Society for Pediatric & Perinatal Epidemiology
16th Annual Meeting**

**Atlanta, Georgia
June 10-11, 2003**

June 10, 2003

4-6 p.m. Registration

6-7 p.m. Panel Discussion –NIH Networks Randomized Trials: The how and whys: *Mike O’Shea (Wake Forest University School of Medicine), Linda Wright (NICHD), Mark Klebanoff (NICHD), Phyllis Leppert (NIH), and John Thorp (UNC School of Medicine)*

7-9 p.m. Poster Session-Infant, Child and Adolescent Health

June 11, 2003

8:00 -8:15 Welcome-*Pierre Buekens, President*

8:15-10:00 Plenary Session I – Pregnancy-Maternal Exposures

Recreational physical activity during and before pregnancy and risk of gestational diabetes mellitus-*JC Dempsey*

Childbearing beyond maternal age 50 and birth outcomes in the United States-*HM Salihu*

Testing a fetal origins model for the racial disparity in adult reproductive outcome: a population-based study-*D Simon*

A parsimonious explanation for intersecting perinatal mortality curves: understanding the effect of race and of maternal smoking-*KS Joseph*

Effects of age, period and birth cohorts on trends in stillbirths in the United States and Canada-*CV Ananth*

Pre-gestational obesity and risk of pre-eclampsia in Peruvian women-*SE Sanchez*

Student Prize Paper – TBA

10:00-10:30 Morning Break

10:30-11:45 Plenary Session II – Infant and Child Health

**Use of a pacifier and the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)-D-K
Lj***

Challenges in classification of diabetes type in children-JM Lawrence

Isolated ventricular enlargement in low birthweight infants-IN Olomu

**Elevated birth prevalence of hypoplastic left heart syndrome in Wisconsin
1997-99-CE Cronk**

**Early mortality among triplets in the United States: Black-White disparity-
AT Williams**

11:45-1:45 Lunch & Poster Viewing-Birth Defects, Pregnancy Complications and Weight Gain, Birth Outcomes, Maternal Exposures, Multiple Births and ART, Methods, and Women's Health**1:45-2:30 Keynote Address**

Epidemiology vs Randomized Trials given by Dr. Curt Meinert

2:30-3:15 Plenary Session III – Randomized Trials

Does prenatal magnesium sulphate reduce the risk of mortality and cerebral palsy in infants born at less than 30 weeks' gestation? – The ACTOMgSO₄ trial-JE Hiller

Meperidine for dystocia during the first stage of labor-C Sosa

Improving women's health postpartum: the impact of provision of written information-T Kabakian-Khasholian

3:15-3:45 Afternoon Break**3:45-4:45 Plenary Session IV – Methods**

Core concepts in perinatal epidemiology: incidence of birth, growth-restriction and death-KS Joseph

**An assessment of the incidence of maternal mortality in the United States
AP MacKay**

Inferences from reproductive epidemiology in clinical settings versus geographically defined populations-DA Savitz

**The effect of placental measurement quality on associations with
birthweight and gestational age-*CM Salafia***

4:45-5:00 Closure

5:00-6:00 Business Meeting

Welcome – *Mike O’Shea*

Journal Editors – *John & Michele Kiely*

Secretary – *Anna Maria Siega-Riz*

Finance – *Cande Ananth*

**Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research
Election Ballot, 2004-05**

Please mark your nominations (one per category) for the post of President-elect and member-at-large. The president-elect serves on SPER's executive board for a period of three years (one year each as president-elect, president, and past-president), while the member-at-large serves for a period of four years.

Further information about SPER and its activities can be found at www.sper.org

President-elect

- David A. Savitz, PhD
- Martha M. Werler, ScD, MPH

Member-at-large (4-year term)

- Wendy L. Hellerstedt, MPH, PhD
- Janet Rich-Edwards, DSc, MPH
- Gary M. Shaw, DrPH

Your completed ballots should be sent by May 30th (e-mailed, faxed, or snail-mail) to:

Barbara Luke, ScD, MPH, RD
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health
University of Miami School of Medicine
1801 NW 9th Avenue, Room 200H
Miami, Florida 33136

Fax: (305) 243-3384
bluke@med.miami.edu

President-Elect**David A. Savitz, PhD**

Department of Epidemiology

University of North Carolina School of Public Health

I am a Professor of Epidemiology and serve as Chair of the Department at the University of North Carolina, School of Public Health. The primary focus of my work is in reproductive epidemiology, including research on preterm birth, fetal growth, pregnancy complications, spontaneous abortion, childhood cancer, and most recently, neurodevelopment. However, I also remain very much involved in cancer and environmental epidemiology, better-established specialties in epidemiology that may well offer some useful lessons applicable to pediatric and perinatal epidemiology.

I have participated in SPER regularly for the past several years, making presentations, participating on a panel, reviewing abstracts, and serving as liaison to the Society for Epidemiologic Research. Sustaining SPER's broad mission to bridge clinical and epidemiologic interests, foster international engagement, and address methodological issues is essential. SPER has made notable contributions in sponsoring an excellent journal and stimulating meeting. However, SPER could do even more to enhance the identity and ultimately the appeal of pediatric and perinatal epidemiology as a choice of specialization within the field of epidemiology. Perceptions regarding research funding and job opportunities influence choices regarding dissertation topics, postdoctoral training, entry-level jobs, and shifts throughout ones career. Through SPER, we should do better to clarify and even promote career opportunities, initially by describing the training, research, and employment opportunities that exist, and then by considering ways that SPER could help to expand such opportunities. Analogous to the role that the Society for Epidemiologic Research played in consolidating the discipline and profession of epidemiology, SPER offers an ideal opportunity to build on its successes and not just reflect but actually shape the field in which we specialize.

President-Elect**Martha M. Werler, ScD, MPH**

Slone Epidemiology Center

School of Public Health

Boston University, Boston, MA

I am an epidemiologist at the Slone Epidemiology Center and an Associate Professor of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health at Boston University. I have been conducting epidemiologic studies of birth defects for 20 years. I was a founding member-at-large of SPER in 1988 and served again from 1996 to 2000. In that capacity, I reviewed abstracts, implemented the election process from nominations to ballot counting, and produced the membership directory.

Over these years, I have seen SPER grow from approximately 60 attendees in 1988 to almost triple that in recent years. With this growth in numbers have come more

presentations covering a wider breadth of topics. One challenge that I see for SPER is fostering such growth while maintaining our “single-session” and “small-feeling” meeting. I believe it is important to continue the cozier atmosphere of our meeting because it encourages scholarly exchange, which enhances our work and is what makes SPER so great. I recall attending early SPER meetings as a junior epidemiologist and relishing the insights provided by senior members as they tossed their experiences, ideas, and opinions back and forth during discussions. Witnessing and, eventually, taking part in these discussions has been an invaluable learning experience for me and one that I don't think any amount of reading or research can replace. As president of SPER, I would like to work to assure that this type of learning is continued at our annual meeting.

As the field of epidemiology evolves, another challenge for SPER is cohesiveness. The burgeoning studies of molecular genetics and gene-environment interactions hold promise that we'll one day have a better grasp on causality of perinatal and pediatric diseases. In the meantime, however, we are faced with issues of racial disparity and acculturation and with a myriad of toxic exposures and harmful behaviors, not to mention the challenge of developing accurate statistical models for interacting risk factors and complex outcomes. With so much going on, careers are more likely to follow increasingly narrower paths and it is already uncommon to find a general epidemiologist who dabbles in a variety of different research areas. In this setting, it is particularly critical for SPER to serve as a forum for cross-fertilization. I would like to see that there remains at SPER a balance of the full range of perinatal and pediatric epidemiologic issues in an inviting atmosphere, so we can continue to learn from one another.

Member-At-Large

Wendy L. Hellerstedt, MPH, PhD

Division of Epidemiology, School of Public Health
University of Minnesota

I received a BA in Psychology in 1979 from the University of Minnesota and an MPH (1989) and a PhD (1992) in Epidemiology from the University of Minnesota. I am an Associate Professor in the Division of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota. My research interests are the biologic, psychosocial and behavioral risk factors that influence pregnancy outcomes, maternal health, and women's health. A major research interest of mine is the development of methods to measure pregnancy intention or feelings among youth; I am currently PI of a CDC grant to examine feelings about pregnancy and family formation among native youth. In pursuit of my interest in data linkage and secondary data analyses, I am co-investigator of a NCHS-funded collaborative research center, housed at the School of Public Health and the Minnesota Department of Health, to develop innovative methods to examine social disparities in reproductive health. I am also co-investigator of the MCH Leadership Training Program at the University of Minnesota. I recently

successfully advocated for, and developed guidelines for, the inclusion of an epidemiology focus to the MCH MPH training program.

I have been a member of SPER since 1991. I would like to serve SPER because it has served me so well: the annual meetings are a critical part of my continuing education. While I, like many others, have served as an abstract reviewer for SPER (since 1995), I would like to contribute more to sustain the high quality and vitality of the annual meetings. I would also like to encourage the development of MCH epidemiologists, by providing opportunities for student involvement in SPER, as well as opportunities for those who teach perinatal, reproductive, and pediatric epidemiology to share their perspectives on training.

Member-at-large

Janet Rich-Edwards, DSc, MPH

Assistant Professor

Department of Ambulatory Care and Prevention

Harvard Medical School and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

Boston, MA

SPER is the leader in promoting novel methods and encouraging thoughtful discussion of research findings in pediatric and perinatal epidemiology, creating a forum for epidemiologists, clinicians, statisticians, and students to exchange ideas. I have especially appreciated SPER's role in fostering communication between those who investigate pregnancy outcome as an "endpoint" and those who consider pregnancy outcome as an "exposure." For example, SPER has been important in raising the level of debate around the "fetal origins of adult disease" hypothesis.

My research interests lie in the intersection of the health of women and their children. Grounded in the belief that health and disease processes originate early in life, my research seeks to identify determinants of women's reproductive health across the life-course, as well as the impact of prenatal and childhood factors on the development of adult chronic disease. Specifically, my research has focused on: lifestyle determinants of women's fertility and pregnancy outcomes; psychosocial stressors affecting risk of preterm birth; and prenatal and childhood predictors of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. I hope that my experience with several cohort studies and with public registry data would inform my work with SPER. I would welcome the chance to serve SPER as a member at large.

Member-at-large

Gary M. Shaw, DrPH

Senior Epidemiologist/Research Director

California Birth Defects Monitoring Program

March of Dimes, Oakland, CA

I received a doctorate in epidemiology in 1986 from the University of California, Berkeley. My research activities over the last 17 years have been directed toward investigating genetic and environmental factors for congenital malformations and exploring methodologic issues relevant to perinatal/pediatric epidemiologists such as recall bias. These activities have been methodologically challenging and have involved a variety of other scientific disciplines (e.g. molecular biologists, toxicologists, mouse geneticists).

I have attended nearly all the annual SPER meetings since our society's beginning. I have presented research findings at the annual meeting and have found the scientific exchange that occurs at these meetings to be extremely valuable. If elected to the position of Member-at-large, I pledge to work hard to maintain, and to enhance where possible, the scientific rigor of our annual meeting as well as ensure that our Society is responsive to the needs of its membership.