



DECEMBER 2003

# SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC AND PERINATAL EPIDEMIOLOGIC RESEARCH

## President's Corner

Planning has begun for the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of SPER to be held in Salt Lake City Utah, June 14-15. In this newsletter you will find the call for abstracts. If you are willing to be an abstract reviewer, please notify Russell Kirby at [rkirby@uab.edu](mailto:rkirby@uab.edu).

Dr. Matthew Gillman, from Harvard Medical School, has accepted our invitation to present the keynote speech on the subject of “the fetal origins of adult disease”. Dr. Gillman’s is a pediatrician and epidemiologist who has published extensively on the determinants of blood pressure in children and the influence of nutrition during childhood on health.

While the initial observations which gave rise to the “fetal origins hypothesis” concerned the association of birth weight and blood pressure later in life, in a broader context, the influence of early life exposures on later health has long been an important theme for perinatal epidemiologists. Consider, for example, the broad range of outcomes for which an association has been found with breast milk. With regard to potential mechanisms linking early life exposures to later health, there is a growing appreciation of the possibility that not only might these influences cause structural changes in organs, cells, or biological molecules, but might also program physiologic responses to recurring stimuli, such as the neuroendocrine response to stress. As our understanding of these early influences increases, it is likely that interventions will be developed in an effort to modify “programmed” responses which initially are

adaptive but subsequently result in adverse health outcomes.

It is not too early to begin drafting your abstract for the annual meeting in Salt Lake City; I hope you will join us as a presenter this year. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I extend very best wishes to you for a joyous winter holiday.

Mike O’Shea



## Seventeenth Annual Meeting Salt Lake City, Utah

Our 2004 meeting will take place June 14-15<sup>th</sup> at the Grand American Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah. This is a new hotel which was just named the winner of the 2003 World’s Best Business Hotel for Salt Lake City by Leisure Travel Readers! If you want to start planning, here is the web for the Grand American: [www.grandamerica.com/homepage\\_fl.html](http://www.grandamerica.com/homepage_fl.html)



The meeting will begin around 5 pm with a Poster Session and Reception. During the poster session we will have a general discussion of a few posters similar to the format of past years. Information concerning registration and the program will be available in the Spring newsletter as well as on line at our web site [www.sper.org](http://www.sper.org).

Please note that information on the two awards that the Society sponsors, the [Student Prize](#) and the [Heinz Berendes International Travel Award](#), are now posted on the web. We encourage our members to apply and to spread the word to potential applicants.

**Beginning with our 2004 meeting**, SPER will sponsor a Late-Breaker Poster Session. This session will allow for the late submission of research completed after the regular deadline for which there is a demonstrated need for timely epidemiologic or public health response or consideration. Abstracts will be evaluated on the basis of a demonstrated need for a timely response. The deadline for submission is **Friday, April 2, 2004**. Those submitting abstracts will be notified of their acceptance by May 3, 2004.

### Call for Abstracts

The theme of the 2004 conference will be fetal origins of childhood, adolescent and adult disease. As always, we welcome abstracts on all topics related to reproduction, fetal development, pregnancy, or child health. Authors of abstracts examining aspects of the fetal origins hypothesis, including methodology, innovative study designs, and empirical observations, are especially encouraged to submit their work.

Abstracts must be submitted electronically at the SPER website. The URL for the call for abstracts can be found at: <http://www.sper.org/Callabstracts2004.htm>. The website will be accessible beginning December 1, 2003 until midnight Eastern Standard Time February 6, 2004. An abstract submission fee of \$25 **PER**

**ABSTRACT** must be sent to the SPER treasurer (Cande Ananth) at the time of submission. For questions about abstract submissions, contact Dr. Ananth at <mailto:cande.ananth@umdnj.edu>. All abstracts will be randomly assigned for blinded review and ranking to three peer reviewers, and authors will be notified of the status of their abstracts shortly after **April 5, 2004**. Notification will occur by email so do not delete an email from SPER@hawaii.rr.com. SPER members who have not served as an abstract reviewer for the past three years but would like to volunteer should contact Russ Kirby (RKirby@uab.edu). Abstracts accepted for presentation will not be published in *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology* as in years past, but will be included in the conference program materials.

### Nominations for Officers

Nominations are being sought for President, Secretary, and one Member-at-Large. The leadership and direction of the Society depends on our members so please consider serving in one of these roles and/or encourage a fellow SPER member to run. Detailed information concerning each office and the nomination form is up on our web site. Nominations are due by February 11<sup>th</sup>. A slate of candidates will be presented to the membership for elections in March. Once again we will attempt an electronic election. Please be aware that we will be following up the first notice with 3 reminders as discussed at the Annual meeting. Make your vote count!



Come join our group-we have fun!

Symposium on the Epidemiology of  
Miscarriage  
Jointly Sponsored by the Society for  
Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic  
Research and the Teratology Society  
June 30, 2004  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

SPER will be jointly hosting a seminar at the Society of Teratology's Annual Meeting to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia June 26<sup>th</sup>-July 1, 2004. Session Organizers include: Christina Chambers, David Savitz, and Martha Werler. The goal of this session is to: examine the methods and current knowledge regarding the causes of miscarriage derived from epidemiology, with consideration of corresponding toxicology, measurement challenges, and future prospects for improved study. More information can be found on the Teratology Society website [www.teratology.org](http://www.teratology.org).

Speakers include:

Introduction – Martha M. Werler, Sc.D. from the Slone Epidemiology Center, Boston University School of Public Health;  
Boston, MA

Animal Models for Studying Miscarriage: Illustration with Study of Drinking Water Disinfection By-Products –Michael G. Narotsky, Ph.D.  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
Research Triangle Park, NC

Genetic Causes of Miscarriage–  
Wendy P. Robinson, Ph.D.  
Department of Medical Genetics  
University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, BC

Immunologic Causes of Miscarriage –Mary  
Stephenson, MD, MSc  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, BC

Epidemiologic Approaches to the Study of Early  
Miscarriage –Germaine Buck, Ph.D.  
National Institute of Child Health and Human  
Development  
Bethesda, MD

Epidemiologic Evidence on Causes of Miscarriage:  
Illustration with Ongoing Study of Drinking Water  
Disinfection By-Products –David A. Savitz, Ph.D.  
Department of Epidemiology  
University of North Carolina School of Public Health  
Chapel Hill, NC

Closing Comments and Discussion– Christina  
Chambers, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Departments of Pediatrics and Family and Preventive  
Medicine  
School of Medicine  
University of California, San Diego  
San Diego, CA