



# Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research

January 2005

## President's Corner

We are looking forward to the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of SPER, which will be held on June 26-27 (yes, it is later and it does begin on a Sunday evening) in Toronto, Canada. The meeting that follows ours is a joint activity of the Society for Epidemiologic Research and the Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Given the location and the activity to follow, I am hoping we will have an unusually strong Canadian contingent at the SPER meeting. Toronto is a great city to visit in June, readily accessible from throughout North America, and still somewhat of a bargain for those from the US. The call for abstracts is included in this newsletter, and if you are interested in volunteering to be a reviewer, please contact Jean Lawrence ([Jean.M.Lawrence@kp.org](mailto:Jean.M.Lawrence@kp.org)).

I am delighted that our keynote speaker this year will be Dr. Duane Alexander, Director of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. It is probably not an exaggeration to claim that there is no single individual who is more influential in shaping the future of research in reproductive, perinatal, and pediatric health. This is an exciting opportunity to hear from Dr. Alexander on the research agenda for NICHD and discuss how epidemiology fits into the broader agenda. For

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## 2005 SPER Meeting

We will hold our 17<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on June 26-27, 2005, at the Westin Harbour Castle in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The meeting will include a poster session and opening reception on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> and a full day of plenary sessions with a poster session on the 27<sup>th</sup>. During the evening poster session (June 26<sup>th</sup>) 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 our spring newsletter as well as on line at our web site ([www.sper.org](http://www.sper.org)).

If you have questions about the meeting format or schedule, please contact Dawn Misra, SPER Secretary, by phone: (734) 647-7944; fax: (734) 763-7379; or email: [dmsira@umich.edu](mailto:dmsira@umich.edu).



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## SPER Awards Information

Please note that information on the two awards 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.

## Future SPER Meeting Dates

June 20-21, 2006  
The Westin Seattle  
Seattle, Washington

reasons that are not always obvious, epidemiology has had great prominence in some areas of health and the corresponding branches of the National Institutes of Health, most notably in research on cancer, cardiovascular disease, and environmental health (NCI, NHLBI, and NIEHS, respectively). In other disease areas and parts of NIH, epidemiology has a very modest presence. At NICHD, the intramural research program has made considerable advancements in the past 5-10 years and emerged as a leading research center for the country. Extramural research activities are dispersed to the various substantive areas within NICHD rather than consolidated as a separate area defined by discipline, with pockets of significant activity in conjunction with demography, contraception, pregnancy, and birth defects, among others. Without making any judgment about the merits of this or alternative strategies, Dr. Alexander's participation in the SPER meeting is an opportunity to reflect on the current and future state of affairs for a key institution affecting our field.

Please consider submitting an abstract for a presentation or poster at the annual meeting in Toronto and plan on joining us there.

## Nominations for Officers

Nominations are being sought for President, Treasurer, and one Member-at-Large.

Our treasurer is Cande Ananth whose term ends this year. The treasurer is responsible for finances, contracts, and membership files. While the Member-at-Large participates in a number of activities, membership recruitment and retention is the primary focus for the Member-at-Large elected this year. This member will be replacing Mary Croughan who will complete her service this year.

Our President-elect is Mary Hediger who will begin her term as President of SPER at the close of the June 2005 annual meeting. We are seeking nominations for a President who will serve as President-elect 2005-2006 and President 2006-2007.

Detailed information concerning each office and the nomination is up on our web site. Nominations are due February 14<sup>th</sup>. A slate of candidates will be presented to the membership for elections in March 2005. We will have an electronic election. Make your vote count!

## First Annual NICHD-IHDCYH Summer Institute in Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology

The Epidemiology Branch of the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, USA (NICHD) and the Institute of Human Development and Child and Youth Health, Canada (IHDCYH) are jointly hosting their 1<sup>st</sup> Annual NICHD-IHDCYH Summer Institute in Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology on July 10-16, 2005. Graduate students, postdoctoral and clinical fellows interested in a research career in reproductive or perinatal epidemiology are invited to apply. The week-long Summer Institute will provide substantive and methodologic training in human fecundity and fertility, pregnancy and perinatal outcomes, maternal health, fetal growth and development, developmental disabilities, and promising new approaches for studying these outcomes. A combined didactic and case-based curriculum will be offered by esteemed faculty affiliated with NICHD and IHDCYH.

Participants will be given a travel stipend (up to \$1,500 provided by IHDCYH); room and board also will be covered. Subject to availability, up to 20 qualified students will be selected. Interested students and fellows are invited to submit, a brief (2-page) cover letter and CV and request two letters of support regarding their future promise as an independent investigator in reproductive or perinatal epidemiology. All documents must be received by March 1, 2005. Applicants will be reviewed by a central committee with equal weighting to: 1) personal statement of professional research interests and career plans; 2) evidence of graduate level training in introductory epidemiology and biostatistics and 3) two letters of support. Priority will be given to students/fellows with demonstrated excellence such as practical research experience or publications in this field. Selection will be made by April 1, 2005.

DHHS and NIH are equal Opportunity Employers.

*Applications should be submitted electronically to:*  
**Gwendoline Simard, course coordinator,**  
**at [gsimard@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:gsimard@cihr-irsc.gc.ca). For more information, please call (613) 941.0424.**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**DEADLINE for  
SUBMISSION of  
ABSTRACTS FOR  
2005 SPER  
MEETING:**

**February 18  
2005!**

## **2005 SPER Meeting Abstracts Submission:**

As always, we welcome abstracts on all topics related to reproduction, fetal development, pregnancy or child health. The deadline is **February 18, 2005**.

Abstracts must be submitted electronically at the SPER website. The URL for the call for abstracts can be found at <http://www.sper.org/Callabstracts2005.htm>. The website is accessible until midnight Eastern Standard Time February 18, 2005. In response to members' concerns, there will be no abstract submission fee this year!

All abstracts will be randomly assigned for blind review and ranking to three peer reviewers, and authors will be notified of the status of their abstracts shortly after **April 4, 2005**. Notification will occur by e-mail so do not delete an email from [SPER@hawaii.rr.com](mailto: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 Jean Lawrence ([Jean.M.Lawrence@kp.org](mailto:Jean.M.Lawrence@kp.org)). 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.

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