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(2019-2020)**

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# SPER Fall Newsletter

## President's Corner

The June meeting in Minneapolis provided the 264 attendees the chance to meet with old friends and colleagues, be introduced to new friends and colleagues, hear about some of the latest research in the field, and have stimulating discussions. Many of us look forward to our Annual Meeting in June as an opportunity to experience a welcoming and academically engaging environment, and I hope everyone enjoyed the meeting.



The last time the Annual Meeting was held in Minneapolis was in 2012 for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting, and that meeting featured special additions to the usual program. The 2019 Annual Meeting in Minneapolis also marked changes from past years. President Courtney Lynch assembled a Program Committee comprised of past presidents, SPER board members, and volunteers. The committee developed a program that saw the introduction of parallel sessions – with member-initiated contributed sessions and a symposium – that allowed for more than 30 platform presentations (vs. the usual of ~20), even if it also required attendees to have to choose between sessions. We plan to expand upon opportunities for member involvement both during the year and at the meeting.

Congratulations to all of the 2019 SPER Award Winners, who are featured elsewhere in this newsletter along with quick facts, highlights, and pictures from the meeting. Thanks to Courtney Lynch and all the members of the Program Committee for their hard work planning the meeting; the co-keynote speakers, Lisa Bodnar and Matt Fox; all of the presenters, abstract reviewers, volunteers, and attendees; as well as to Jonathan Snowden for leading a terrific Methods Workshop, and Past Student Representative, Stephanie Leonard, for organizing the Workshop.

Thanks to our out-going Executive Committee officers for their dedication and service to SPER: Olga Basso (Past President), Una Grewal (Secretary for 6 (!) years), Sunni Mumford (Member-at-large) and Stephanie Leonard (Student Representative). Welcome to our new officers who join the Executive Committee for 2019-2020: Lauren Wise (President Elect), Sarah Keim (Secretary), Anne Marie Jukic (Member-at-large), and Krista Wollny (Student Representative). The Executive Committee has gotten off to a quick start working to address issues that were raised at the business meeting, as well as feedback we received on the Annual Survey (thanks to the 166 of you who completed the survey!), including developing new opportunities for engagement and participation, and, of course, planning SPER 2020 in Boston.

I'm happy to share more information about these developments below – read on to learn more. And, be on the lookout for announcements on our website (<https://sper.org/>), email, and on Twitter where you can follow us using @SPER\_News.

I look forward to working with the Executive Committee and what promises to be an exciting year. Please reach out to me with questions, suggestions, and/or comments.

Brian Whitcomb

SPER President, 2019-2020

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**Join us for the  
SPER 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting**

Boston, Massachusetts

June 15-16, 2020

**Abstract Deadline**

Friday, January 31, 1pm EST

**Award Nomination Deadlines**

- Heinz Berendes Award – February 7, 2020
- Student Prize Paper Award – March 6, 2019
- Rising Star Award – March 4, 2019
- Mentoring Award – March 4, 2019



## Highlights from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting

June 17-18, 2019 – Minneapolis, MN

[Click here](#) for meeting archives

**In response to member feedback**, we were excited to implement several exciting changes to the Annual Meeting this year, including:

- An extended program
- Concurrent-contributed sessions (member-initiated)
- A symposium (member-initiated)

### **Annual Meeting Quick Stats**

- Advanced Methods Workshop: 75 attendees
- Annual Meeting: 264 attendees
  - 32 oral presentations (**↑ 48% from 2018!**)
  - 207 poster presentations

## Day 1: Mon, June 17

### ***Advanced Methods Workshop***

The Advanced Methods Workshop provided an informative and stimulating start to the 2019 Annual Meeting. **Jonathan Snowden** and **Kelly Reavis** (Oregon Health & Sciences University) led this year's session, which focused on the application of causal inference

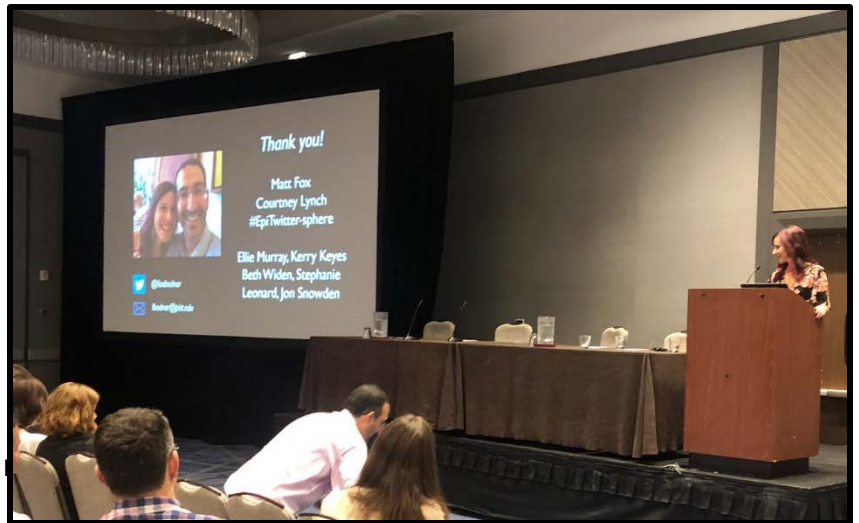
methods to perinatal epidemiology topics. The workshop was highly interactive and featured a series of hands-on, practical exercises. Many thanks to our presenters!

### SPER Members!

Did you miss the Methods Workshop or misplace your notes from the session? Don't worry! [Click here](#) to access the workshop archives!

### Keynote Address

**Lisa Bodnar** (University of Pittsburgh) and **Matthew Fox** (Boston University) kicked off the opening session of the Annual Meeting with their engaging keynote address entitled “What the Hashtag? Using Social Media to Extend Your Reach as an Epidemiologist.” Their presentation outlined ways in which epidemiologists can leverage social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, podcasts) to promote active discussion of their own work and those of their colleagues. They also described how these platforms provide an important source of instrumental and social support to epidemiologists around the globe. Thanks to Dr. Bodnar and Dr. Fox for their engaging address!



Pictured: 2019 Keynote Speaker Lisa Bodnar (University of Pittsburgh)



Pictured: 2019 Keynote Speaker Matthew Fox (Boston University)

### ***Concurrent Contributed Sessions – NEW IN 2019!***

The 2019 Annual Meeting marked the debut of concurrent, contributed sessions (member-initiated). **Danelle Lobdell** (Environmental Protection Agency) chaired a session of engaging presentations on environmental exposures and childhood/perinatal outcomes, and **Sarah Keim** (Ohio State University) chaired a diverse set of talks in pediatric epidemiology. Many thanks to our contributed session moderators and participants for an informative series of presentations!

## **Day 2: Tues, June 18**

### ***Roundtable Discussions***

Three engaging roundtables provided a great start to the second day of the annual meeting. **Pauline Mendola** (NICHD) discussed environmental influences on reproduction, **Cande Ananth** (Columbia University; PPE Editor-in-Chief) and **Mark Klebanoff** (Ohio State University; AJE Associate Editor) moderated a roundtable entitled “Meet the Editors,” and **Sarah Keim** (Ohio State University), **Courtney Lynch** (Ohio State University), and **Lauren Wise** (Boston University) moderated an open discussion regarding career and funding advice.

### ***Plenary Presentations***

The plenary sessions featured a broad range of topics with relevance to parents, children, and families. Themes included *fertility and fecundity* (e.g., pregnancy loss, in-vitro fertilization), *pregnancy health* (e.g., placental characteristics, preeclampsia), *maternal behavioral health* (e.g., cannabis, opioid use), and *social determinants of health* (e.g., public policy impacts; racism; neighborhood characteristics). Thanks to all of the presenters for an excellent series of talks!

### ***Symposium – NEW IN 2019!***

For the first time, the SPER Annual Meeting included a member-initiated symposium in the plenary program. This year’s symposium was organized by **Natasha Nassar** (University of Sydney) and featured a series of presentations that population-based, linked datasets to address topics in reproductive, perinatal, and pediatric epidemiology. Presenters addressed a range of exposures (e.g., delivery circumstance, birth defects) and outcomes (e.g., miscarriage, neurodevelopmental disorders) using this methodology and represented



investigative teams from Australia, Norway, and the United States. Thanks to Dr. Nassar and the symposium participants for your stimulating contributions to the meeting

## 2019 Award Recipients

### Student Prize Paper Award

**Winner: Dominique Heinke, Sc.D.**

**(Massachusetts Department of Public Health)**

Presentation Title: Risk of Stillbirth among fetuses with non-syndromic major birth defects:  
A population-based cohort study

#### **Honorable mentions:**

*Alexandra Purdue-Smithe, PhD*

Epidemiology Branch, NICHD, NIH

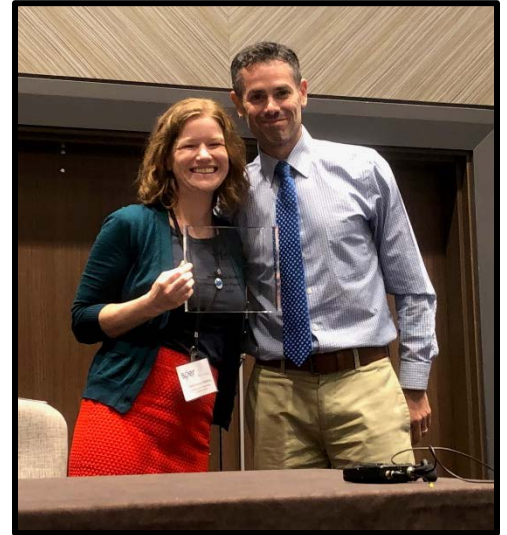
Title: Preconception vitamin D status and offspring sex ratio among women with history of pregnancy loss

*Liv Kvalvik, MD, PhD*

Department of Global Public Health and Primary Care

University of Bergen

Title: Five Complications of Term Pregnancies that Increase the Risk of Future Preterm Delivery



Pictured: Dominique Heinke (L);  
SPER President-Elect Brian Whitcomb (R)

### Heinz Berendes International Travel Award

**Can Liu, Ph.D.**

**(Karolinska Institutet)**

Presentation Title: Perinatal health of refugee- and asylum-seeking women in Sweden 2014-17:  
A register-based cohort study



Pictured: SPER Past-President Olga Basso (L);  
Can Liu (R)

## Rising Star Award

**Wei Perng, Ph.D.**  
**(Colorado School of Public Health)**



Pictured: SPER President-Elect Brian Whitcomb (L);  
Wei Perng (R)

## Mentoring Award

**Emily Oken, M.D., M.P.H.**  
**(Harvard University)**



Pictured: SPER President-Elect Brian Whitcomb (L);  
Emily Oken (R)

## President's Award

**Cande Ananth, Ph.D.**  
**(Columbia University)**



## **2019 Trainee Poster Awards**

### ***Winners***

**Rachel Gruver**, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

- Title: Delayed cognitive and language development in 4-6-year-old HIV-infected children compared to HIV-exposed uninfected and HIV-unexposed children in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa
- Co-authors: Sumaya Mall, Jane Kvalsvig, Justin Knox, Claude Mellins, Chris Desmond, Shuaib Kauchali, Stephen Arpadi, Myra Taylor, Leslie Davidson

**Emma Rosen**, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

- Title: Urinary oxidative stress levels and reproductive outcomes among women undergoing fertility treatments
- Co-authors: Lidia Mínguez-Alarcón, John D. Meeker, Ginger L. Milne, Russ Hauser, Kelly K. Ferguson

### ***Honorable Mentions***

**Michelle Roh**, University of California, San Francisco

- Title: Does sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine antimalarial treatment for pregnant mothers influence birth weight via non-malarial mechanisms?
- Co-Author: M. Maria Glymour

**Ya-Hui Yu**, McGill University

- Title: The effect of pre-pregnancy obesity on stillbirth and infant mortality in a cohort of multiparous women
- Co-Authors: Lisa Bodnar, Katherine Hime, Maria Brooks, Ashley Naimi



## Upcoming News, Events, and Activities

### Help shape the 2020 Annual Meeting!

- *Session submissions.* As we did for 2019, we will invite members to propose sessions for the 2020 Annual Meeting. The member-initiated sessions in Minneapolis were well received, generating lots of positive feedback in person and on our Annual Survey. We are excited to include these again for 2020, and encourage members to submit proposals. Keep an eye out for an announcement in the coming weeks.
- *Program Committee.* Also as last year, we will form a Program Committee to work on planning the meeting, selecting content and helping make the meeting agenda. We hope to include volunteers from the membership among the members of the committee. A call for nominations to serve on this committee will be announced in the coming weeks.

Check elsewhere in this newsletter for information on the 2020 Annual Meeting, including deadlines for abstract submission and award nominations.

### Join a Committee! Opportunities for member involvement

For 2019-20, we will have 4 standing committees/working groups for members to join, including:

- **Communications Committee**, working to shape our social media presence and policy (as well as the Fall Newsletter!);
- **Outreach Committee**, spearheading efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in the Society;
- **Digital Engagement Committee**, coordinating our online seminar series throughout the year (including two upcoming events in October);
- **Student and Postdoc Working Group**, to plan student-focused events and promote student engagement with the Society.

[Click here](#) for our new “Committees” page on the SPER website where you can find more information about these groups as well as links to join them!

### Upcoming Events

- SPER is co-sponsoring the October 16<sup>th</sup> event in the SER-SPC Online Journal Club series [Click here](#) for more information and to register!

- On October 18<sup>th</sup>, the Epidemiology Branch of NIEHS is hosting a symposium on Oct 18<sup>th</sup> in honor of the retirement of **SPER Past-President Allen Wilcox** titled “Reproductive Epidemiology – Past, Present, and Future.” [Click here](#) to register!

## Membership Renewal Time!

It’s time to renew your SPER membership for 2020! Benefits include discounted registration rates for the annual meeting; access to the online jobs and fellowships board; participation in the electronic mailing list; subscription to *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology* – and more! If you would like to join SPER (or know a colleague who does), [click here](#) to complete the membership application.

## Follow SPER!

Keep a look out for our Winter newsletter months from now, and in the meantime, check our website or follow us on Twitter/Facebook for society updates!



**@SPER\_News**



**Search: SPER**