



SPER Newsletter (Spring 2021)

President's Corner

Executive Committee (2020-2021)

President:

Lauren Wise

Past-President:

Brian Whitcomb

President-Elect:

Lisa Bodnar

Secretary:

Sarah Keim

Treasurer:

Erinn Hade

Members-at-Large:

Audrey Gaskins

Anne Marie Jukic

Claire Margerison

Nicole Talge

**International
Representative:**

Siri Haberg

Student Representative:

Sonia Grandi

Administrator:

Sue Bevan



I hope this newsletter finds you safe and healthy. SPER leadership recognizes the stressful impact that the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism and social injustice, and police violence have had on many of our SPER members and that we have a responsibility to highlight and address these structural issues. I look forward to sharing with you some of the initiatives that SPER has implemented in the past year in an effort to foster equity and inclusion in the Society.

The executive board made an early decision to make the 34th Annual Meeting 100% virtual because we realized that many of you would be unable to travel, especially our international colleagues. With that in mind, all sessions will be available on a virtual platform, and all presentations will be live and have live Q&A. We still recognize that, due to the time zone differences, some of our international colleagues will have a less-than-ideal experience attending the virtual meeting. For this reason, we will make all content from oral abstract sessions available to meeting registrants on the SPER website within two months after the annual meeting. For more details about the annual meeting, see below.

I am thankful for the opportunity to hold virtual gatherings of our members. Thank you for your support of SPER and for your contributions to the 2021 annual meeting.

Below, I provide updates on: 1) activities of the SPER committees, 2) the 2021 Annual Meeting, and 3) other activities.

(1) Activities of SPER Committees

Since 2018, SPER formed new committees [<https://sper.org/committees/>] in an effort to increase opportunities for member involvement and engagement. This newsletter includes detailed updates from each of committee chairs. Briefly, the *Outreach Committee*, chaired by Dr. Claire Margerison, has been overseeing efforts toward

improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the Society and has several initiatives in progress. Some of these new initiatives include:

- Offering travel awards to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (two awards in 2021)
- Reducing financial barriers to joining SPER (membership waivers, bundled memberships, and discounted registration fees)
- Increasing the transparency by which SPER selects its leadership, content for its annual meeting, and session moderators (as detailed in the new “SPER processes” document)
- Including at least one standing member from the DEI committee on the Program Committee (which selects content for the Annual Meeting and online sessions)
- Increasing mentorship and support of junior members via the *Welcoming Peers* program (initiated in 2021)
- Revising abstract submission categories to improve matching of abstracts with appropriate reviewers (initiated in 2021)
- Creating more opportunities for oral presentation (e.g., 12 concurrent contributed sessions; 22 speed talk sessions in 2021)
- Asking presenters at all SPER sessions to reflect on how their work can influence health equity – see “Health Equity in Research” at <https://sper.org/annual-meeting-2/> (initiated in 2021)

Most of the above initiatives are now described in detail on the SPER website; others will be posted on the Society’s website by the Fall.

I am indebted to the members of our DEI subcommittee who have been working tirelessly to advance these initiatives to improve the culture of SPER so that it is more welcoming to all individuals in our field and to identify ways to make the structures and processes of SPER more equitable.

The *Communications Committee*, chaired by Dr. Nicole Talge, generates social media posts and newsletters to disseminate news about SPER and communicate with the membership. The *Digital Engagement Committee*, chaired by Dr. Anne Marie Jukic, has organized several informative webinars throughout the year, including Speed Talk Sessions of abstracts accepted for the 2021 Annual Meeting. Several more webinars are planned for the summer and beyond, and are listed here: <https://sper.org/online-events/>. Attendance at the webinars has been high, and we hope you are enjoying these presentations. The *Student and Post-doc Working Group*, chaired by Dr. Sonia Grandi, has been busy planning various activities for student involvement with the Society, including the Advanced Methods Workshop (Tuesday, June 15, 2021). All four of these committees continue to welcome volunteers to get involved; for more information about the committees, please visit our website: <https://sper.org/committees/>.

(2) SPER’s 34th Annual Meeting – Virtual Conference 2021

The SPER Annual Meeting will begin on Monday, June 21, 2021 at 1:30PM ET with a set of concurrent oral abstract sessions (x3), followed by a symposium on COVID-19 infection & vaccination and risk of reproductive, perinatal, and pediatric outcomes, a one-hour networking session, and a social hour. On Tuesday June 22nd, we will

have three additional sets (x3) of concurrent oral abstract sessions, two additional networking sessions, and a keynote address by Dr. Elizabeth Howell at 11:30AM ET. The meeting will conclude with the Society's Business Meeting at 5:00PM ET on Tuesday, June 22nd. All speed talks will take place in the 4-week period before the annual meeting (May 24-June 18). You can register for these events by visiting our website (see "online events" or click on PDF program file under "annual meeting"). While this year may look different, our goal is to include some of the most popular meeting features based on feedback received from our 2020 Annual Meeting survey. For example, we have included three one-hour networking sessions and a social hour during the meeting. We also give all registrants full access to all oral abstract sessions (for those who want to shuttle across different concurrent sessions), and we have added breaks after each session. The social hour was designed to provide a relaxed and unstructured environment for new and old members to connect informally.

SPER's keynote speaker for the 2021 annual meeting will be Dr. Elizabeth Howell. Dr. Howell is a physician, researcher, and advocate committed to improving the health and well-being of women. Her scholarship focuses on the study of racial and ethnic inequities in maternal and child health, postpartum depression, and maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. Her research is recognized for shaping national policy and implementing strategies to reduce racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality. In 2020, Dr. Howell became Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine. You can learn more about Dr. Howell and her work here: <https://www.pennmedicine.org/updates/blogs/womens-health/2020/september/meet-elizabeth-howell-md>

We received 240 abstract submissions in 2021, and we thank our abstract reviewers for their time. Although there will be no poster sessions at the virtual meeting, all accepted abstracts from current members were selected for oral presentation as part of a concurrent contributed oral abstract session at the annual meeting or as a speed talk before the meeting. In addition, all accepted abstracts from current members will be published in a special issue of *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*, the Society's journal. The complete program for the 2021 Annual Meeting is posted on our website: <https://sper.org/>.

(3) Other Activities

Congratulations to the newly-elected executive board members – Dr. Jaime Slaughter-Acey (President-Elect), Dr. Theresa Chapple-McGruder (Member-At-Large), and Dr. Luther-King Fasehun (Student/Post-Doc Representative) — I look forward to working with you. I am extremely grateful to all members who ran for board positions this year. Thank you for your willingness to serve the Society. I am indebted to our outgoing board members—Dr. Brian Whitcomb (Past President), Dr. Nicole Talge (Member-At-Large), and Dr. Sonia Grandi (Student/Post-Doc Representative) for the generous service to the Society. I am also excited to continue working with Dr. Lisa Bodnar during her SPER presidency. Congratulations to the 2021 SPER Award Winners, who will be honored for their work at the virtual meeting. Thanks to all members of the 2021 Program Committee (acknowledged below)—which includes students, postdocs, faculty, and past presidents of SPER—for their hard work planning this year's annual

meeting. I am also thankful to Dr. Howell (keynote speaker) and all of the presenters, abstract reviewers, volunteers (especially the speed-talk tech hosts!), and conference attendees.

Bylaws: Past-President Dr. Brian Whitcomb, with the help of International Representative Dr. Siri Haberg, drafted a proposal for modifications to the bylaws (*e.g.*, eliminating reference to mailed ballots) and the revisions were passed via an April 2021 vote.

Remember to check the website and follow our Twitter account (@SPER_News) to stay up-to-date with the organization. The Executive Committee has been working hard to address issues based on feedback received on the Annual Survey (thanks to the 175+ of you who completed the survey), including developing new opportunities for engagement and participation, generating new ideas for online content, and for planning the annual meeting. Please keep an eye out for the 2021 annual survey and let us know how the Society is working for you.

We are always happy for feedback and suggestions, so if you have ideas for how to improve our organization or any questions or concerns, please contact me (lwise@bu.edu) or other members of the Executive Committee (<https://sper.org/about-sper-2/executive-committee/>). And, thanks to everyone who submitted abstracts and symposia proposals, served on committees, and volunteered to review abstracts and other submissions. We are happy to see so many people involved with SPER, and we appreciate your contributions. I look forward to working with the Executive Committee on what promises to be an exciting year.

Lastly – please remember to renew your membership for 2021. Your continued support of the Society means more this year than ever!

See you at the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting in June!

Lauren Wise

SPER President, 2020-2021

lwise@bu.edu

2021 SPER Annual Meeting

Monday, June 21 & Tuesday, June 22

Coming to you virtually!

Advanced Methods Workshop (Registration required)

The 2021 Advanced Methods workshop will focus on causal inference in perinatal and pediatric epidemiology and will be led by Drs. Yu-Han Chiu and Jessica Young (Harvard University) on Tues, June 15 at 3 pm ET. [Click here](#) to register!



Unable to attend the workshop this year?

Don't worry! For only \$25, you can access the workshop recording and materials on the SPER website.

[Click here](#) for more information!

Annual Meeting Virtual Program (Registration required; Discounted rates!)

We have pulled together an exciting line-up of reproductive, perinatal, and pediatric research presentations for the virtual program on June 21-22!

Our Annual Meeting program includes:

- Concurrent contributed sessions (social determinants; environmental exposures; substance use; maternal depression; nutrition; pregnancy loss)
- A symposium on COVID-19 infection, vaccination, and perinatal outcomes
- A keynote presentation by Elizabeth Howell, M.D., M.P.P. (University of Pennsylvania)
- Three networking sessions
- SPER Award presentations
- SPER Business meeting
- And more! [Click here](#) for the Annual Meeting program and a list of presenters!

Annual Meeting Registration

We recognize the financial impact of COVID-19 may serve as an obstacle to participating in the Annual Meeting. As a result, we are offering two tiers of registration fees: Regular or Discounted.

[Click here](#) for more information and to register!

Rapid Talks (Registration required; free!)

Mark your calendars! We are excited to host a series of Rapid Talks to survey the many outstanding abstracts submitted to the Annual Meeting. Session-specific registration is required but is completely free - [click here](#) to sign up!

Here is the schedule at-a-glance:

Session Title	Date	Time (Eastern)
Infectious Disease	2-June	12-1:20 PM
Mixed Session (A)	2-June	12-1:20 PM
Pregnancy Outcomes (B)	2-June	12-1:20 PM
Mental Health	4-June	1-2:20 PM
Mixed Session (B)	4-June	1-2:20 PM
Fetal Loss/Stillbirth/Infant Mortality	8-June	1-2:20 PM
Genetics	8-June	1-2:20 PM
Health Equity	8-June	1-2:20 PM
Environment/Climate Change	10-June	12-1:20 PM
Obstetric Health (A)	10-June	12-1:20 PM
Women's Health	10-June	12-1:20 PM
Mixed Session (C)	16-June	12-1:20 PM
Nutrition/Obesity	16-June	12-1:20 PM
Pregnancy Outcomes (C)	16-June	12-1:20 PM
Child Health & Development (C)	18-June	12-1:20 PM
Obstetric Health (B)	18-June	12-1:20 PM

Many thanks to participants in the first set of Rapid Talks on birth defects, child health & development, pregnancy outcomes, and social determinants/substance use! Recordings of these sessions will become available within the coming weeks to SPER members! [Click here](#) for more information.

Twitter Posters (optional)

Looking for an additional opportunity to engage with the SPER membership about your research?



Consider making a Twitter Poster! The process is simple:

- [Use this template](#) (optimized aspect ratio for Twitter) to create three slides that summarize key points from your presentation. credit: Mike Morrison.
- Save the template as an animated GIF. The resulting file will cycle among the three slides as part of a single image. To do this:
 - If you have PowerPoint 365:
 - File → Export → Animated GIF. Save the animated GIF your computer,
 - If you do not have PowerPoint 365:
 - File → Export → Create a Video. Save the video to your computer.
 - Use a freely available Video to Animated GIF converter (<https://ezgif.com/video-to-gif>) and save the GIF to your computer
- Using your Twitter account, post the animated GIF with the hashtag **#SPER_TwitterPosters2021** on **Monday, June 21**. Don't forget to tag **@SPER_News**, too!

Questions?

[Click here](#) for a short video description of the process and [click here](#) for an outstanding Twitter Poster prepared by Fintan Mooney and colleagues (University of Massachusetts) for the 2020 Annual Meeting!



Thank you!



2021 Abstract Reviewers

Many thanks to the following SPER members who volunteered their time and expertise to review submissions for the Annual Meeting!

Myriam Afeiche	Amanda Elmore	Christine Langton	Gaia Pocobelli
Katherine Ahrens	Luther-King Fasehun	Zohra Lassi	Farah Qureshi
Melissa Amyx	Audrey Gaskins	Lisiane Leal	Rema Ramakrishnan
Sylvia Badon	Akhgar Ghassabian	Sarka Lisonkova	Sonia Robinson
Julia Baek	Jessica Gleason	Courtney Lynch	Natalie Rosenquist
Olga Basso	Sonia Grandi	David Mallinson	Eric Rubenstein
Theresa Bastain	Katherine Grantz	Claire Margerison	Carolyn Salafia
Estifanos Baye	Brittany Griffin	Safyer McKenzie-Sampson	Kaitlyn Stanhope
Emine Bircan	Catherine Haggerty	Joanna Merckx	Kelly Strutz
Lisa Bodnar	Quaker Harmon	Lidia Minguez Alarcon	Anita Subramanian
Katherine Bowers	Megan Harvey	Susanna Mitro	Morgan Swanson
Alexa Bowie	Penelope Howards	Sunni Mumford	Vivian Ukah
Miraides Brown	Barbara Hudson-Hanley	Hannah Murphy	Catherine Vladutiu
Carolyn Cesta	Jennifer Hutcheon	Mrudula Naidu	Katheryn Wagner
Jorge Chavarro	Marni Jacobs	Shahpar Najmabadi	Amelia Wesselink
Helen Chin	Pamela Jo Johnson	Natasha Nassar	Elizabeth Widen
Giehae Choi	Anne Marie Jukic	Collette Ncube	Jennifer Zeitlin
Tim Ciesielski	Sarah Keim	Carrie Nobles	Mingyu Zhang
Sara Conroy	Keewan Kim	Marina Ospina	Sifang Kathy Zhao
Carolyn Cramoy	Stephanie Kim	Kristin Palmsten	Dougie Zubizarreta
Valery Danilack	Russell Kirby	Jennifer Peck	
Stephanie Eick	Jessica Knight	Wei Perng	

The 2021 Program Committee

We wish to extend a special thanks to the 2021 Program Committee members for their flexibility, dedication, and input in generating the Annual Meeting program.

Suzan Carmichael	Russell Kirby	Collette Ncube	Lauren Wise
Helen Chin	Sonia Grandi	Amy Padula	Mollie Wood
Leslie Farland	Anne Marie Jukic	Wei Perng	Edwina Yeung
Luther-King Fasehun	Angela Malek	Alexandra Perdue-Smithe	
Kelly Ferguson	Carmen Messerlian	Elizabeth Widen	

2021 Annual Meeting Moderators

Izzudin Aris	Sonia Grandi	Sunni Mumford	Danielle Stevens
Hilary Brown	Melanie Jacobson	Collette Ncube	Sarah Stone
Jessie Buckley	Renee Johnson	Amy Nichols	Anita Subramanian
Theresa Chapple-McGruder	Anne Marie Jukic	Yael Nillini	Marie Thoma
Helen Chin	Menolly Kaufman	Emily Oken	Ugochinyere Vivian Ukah
Jacqueline Cohen	Russell Kirby	Amy Padula	Beth Widen
Eugene Declercq	Jeffrey Korte	Wei Perng	Andrew Williams
Tania Desrosiers	Liv Kvalvik	Alexandra Purdue-Smithe	Mollie Wood
Leslie Farland	Angela Malek	Kristen Rappazzo	Edwina Yeung
Luther-King Fasehun	Shruthi Malhalingaiah	David Savitz	
Kelly Ferguson	Chantel Martin	Karen Schliep	
Akhgar Ghassabian	Carmen Messerlian	Jaime Slaughter-Acey	

2021 Annual Meeting Technology Hosts

Helen Chin	Ginna Doss	Anne Marie Jukic
Tim Ciesielski	Hannah Jahnke	Carmen Messerlian

Committee News

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is excited to spread the word about society news and publicize activities through our social media platforms and seasonal newsletters. We have launched several initiatives to enhance member engagement, most notably our live tweeting and discussion moderation of the online webinars and rapid talks. We also recently launched a new initiative on social media (using the hashtag #SPER_Spotlights) to introduce you to the many trainees, scientists, and practitioners who make our society great. Our group is committed to ensuring initiatives such as these promote equity in our field and are grateful to the Outreach/Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee for feedback on them prior to implementation. If you are interested in joining our vibrant group, please click here to contact us: <https://sper.org/committees/>. Many thanks to the Communications Committee members for their hard work in coordinating our activities this past year. I also wish to thank the SPER membership for the opportunity to serve you and the society for the past four years as Member-at-Large. It has been my honor and pleasure.

Communications Committee Membership (2020-2021)

Nicole Talge (Chair)	Katherine Bowers	Sunni Mumford	Danielle Stevens
Emily Barrett	Dominique Heinke	Maria Politis	Krista Wollny

Digital Engagement Committee (DEC)

In response to the SPER membership survey, the DEC has been working hard to increase online content for our members. Two online webinars were held in May, 2021: “New insights into environmental exposures and uterine leiomyomata” on May 11th, and “The role of wealth accumulation in Black-White preterm delivery disparities: a causal mediation analysis approach” on May 18. Recordings of online events are available to members here: <https://sper.org/online-events/>. SPER is excited to announce that all submitted abstracts for the annual meeting will be presented live! In addition to the program scheduled during the annual meeting days, we have organized a series of “Speed Talks” sessions that will occur in the weeks up to the annual meeting. Speed Talk sessions are scheduled around noon Eastern time on May 26, 27, June 2, 4, 8, 10, 16, and 18. There will be multiple sessions on each day, similar to concurrent sessions at a live meeting. Please attend any sessions that fit your schedule and share the schedule with your colleagues. Speed Talks are open to the public, but registration is required (<https://sper.org/online-events/>). We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming session!

DEC Membership (2020-2021)

Anne Marie Jukic (Chair)	Luther-King Fasehun	Shahpar Najmabadi	Lauren Wise
Cande Ananth	Sonia Grandi	Natasha Nassar	Krista Wollny
Jessie Buckley	Stephanie Leonard	Shu Qin Wei	Yeyi Zhu
Timothy Ciesielski	Buyun Liu	Brian Whitcomb	

Student & Postdoc Working Group

It has been a pleasure serving as the student/postdoc representative on the SPER executive committee this past year. In conjunction with the committee, we organized two webinars, two journal clubs with the SPC-SER committee, and held an open meeting with our membership. We are also excited for two upcoming events the week before the annual meeting, including the advanced methods workshop and a speed-networking session. Visit the SPER website for details and to register. We are also looking forward to future initiatives, including a mentorship program and a career development series. As we start a new year, I encourage trainees to reach out with any suggestions on how we can provide a value added for you as a member of SPER. Thank you for your participation in our events. I look forward to seeing you at the virtual meeting!

Student & Postdoc Working Group Membership (2020-2021)

Sonia Grandi (Chair)	Ruth Geller	Kelly O'Shea	Ugochi Vivian Ukah
Asma Ahmed	Michelle Klawans	Patrick Seitzinger	Krista Wollny
Chad Coleman	Zohra Lassi	Sara Stephens	
Stephanie Eick	Hannah Murphy	Danielle Stevens	
Michelle Dimitris	Abidemi Okechukwu	Sarah Twardowski	

Outreach/Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee

The Outreach/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is organizing a Welcoming Peers initiative for the SPER 2021 Annual Meeting. The purpose of this initiative is to link new attendees and new SPER members with folks who have been part of SPER for a while. The Welcoming Peers will personally welcome new meeting attendees, answer questions about the meeting, facilitate networking with scholars doing similar work, and attend newer members' talks and posters. We look forward to continuing Welcoming Peers in person in 2022! The Committee has also put together a short presentation on how SPER presenters can incorporate issues of health equity into their research and presentations.

Outreach Committee Membership (2020-2021)

Claire Margerison (Chair)	Deshayne Fell	Reem Masarwa	Jonathan Snowden
Shalmali Bane	Irene Headen	Dawn Misra	Nicole Talge
Michelle Dimitris	Stephanie Leonard	Olivia Orta	Vivian Ukah
Galit Levi Dunitz	Angela Malek	Jaime Slaughter-Acey	

Election Results

Executive Committee

Thanks to all members who offered their service to SPER and ran for election! Our newly elected officers for 2020 are:

President-Elect

Jaime Slaughter-Acey, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Division of Epidemiology & Community Health
University of Minnesota School of Public Health

Member at Large

Theresa Chapple-McGruder, Ph.D.
Director
Oak Park Health Department
Oak Park, IL

Student Representative

Luther-King Fasehun, M.D., MSc
Doctoral Student
Department of Epidemiology
Temple University College of Public Health

SPER Bylaws

Issue	Result
I vote in favor of: Process for setting SPER membership	Pass
I vote in favor of: Process for making changes to SPER Bylaws	Pass
I vote in favor of: Updating outdated language	Pass

2021 SPER Awards

Congratulations to the winners of the 2021 SPER awards!

Heinz Berendes

Alice Hocquette, MSc
INSERM Equipé EPOPé
Maternité Port Royal
Paper: International vs. national growth charts for identifying small- and large-for-gestational age newborns: A population-based study in 15 European countries

Rising Star Award

Audrey Gaskins, ScD
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Epidemiology
Emory University Rollins School of Public Health

Student Prize Paper

Timothy Nielsen, MPH
University of Sydney
Paper: Association of multiple maternal inflammatory exposures in pregnancy and child ADHD by ten years of age: a population-based cohort study

Mentoring Award

Barbara Abrams, DrPH, RD
Professor
Division of Epidemiology
University of California-Berkeley School of Public Health

Diversity Award

Ugochinyere Vivian Ukah, MPH, Ph.D.
Postdoctoral Fellow
McGill University

Diversity Award

Ixel Hernandez, MPH
Ph.D. Student
University of Southern California

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