

**Executive Committee
(2021-2022)**

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Jaime Slaughter-Acey

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Claire Margerison

Theresa Chapple-McGruder

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Representative:**

Siri Haberg

Student Representative:

Luther-King Fasehun

Administrator:

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SPER Fall Newsletter

President's Corner

Hello friends and colleagues!



It is my great honor to communicate with you for the first time as President of SPER! In very uncertain times, I am grateful for colleagues like you who can continue to work towards the society's mission of improving maternal and child health through rigorous and innovative research.

After reading the results of our membership survey and informal conversations with many of you, I believe the virtual 2021 annual meeting was a great success! With so many challenges in 2020 and 2021, it was quite a feat to create a meeting that included many great oral presentations, fascinating symposia, and interesting award presentations. Congratulations to the 2021 SPER Award Winners, who are featured below, along with information about their work. Our keynote speaker Dr. Elizabeth Howell gave an outstanding keynote address on racial and ethnic inequities in maternal and child health.

My gratitude goes out to Lauren Wise, our now Past-President, and the entire Program Committee for putting together this thoughtful program. Special shout-out to Anne Marie Jukic and the Digital Engagement Committee for their incredibly hard work in organizing over 20 speed talk sessions so that more of our members could present their work outside of a virtual poster session. Thanks to Past Student Representative Sonia Grandi for organizing a stellar Methods Workshop on causal inference in pediatric and perinatal epidemiologic research presented by Yu-Han Chiu and Jessica Young.

Our virtual networking events also connected attendees with networking and social opportunities. Lastly, I am heartened to see the involvement of many more of our members, including newer members and trainees, to moderate and participate in these sessions. The diversity in voices that made up our virtual meeting is critical for ensuring that our society grows to be inclusive and equitable. Thank you all!

Don't forget that SPER members can access printed abstracts, methods workshop slides, and the business meeting slides on the Meetings Archive page of sper.org. Recorded sessions from the meeting can be accessed by registrants by contacting Sue Bevan (sbevan@sper.org).

It is my sincere hope (fingers and toes crossed) that we will be meeting in person in Chicago this June. We will return to our usual schedule of starting the meeting Monday, June 13 starting at noon with the Advanced Methods Workshop and concluding Tuesday, June 14 at 6:00 pm after the Business Meeting. Later this year, we will be asking for volunteers to join the Program

Committee who, along with the SPER Executive Committee, will help build a meeting that will serve your scientific, networking, and social needs.

Please note important deadlines for the 2022 annual meeting: **symposium submissions** due November 15, 2021 11:59 PM PST, **abstract submissions** due January 28, 2022 11:59 PM PST, **Berendes award nominations** due January 27, 11:59 PM PST, **and student prize, mentoring, rising star, travel award to promote diversity award nominations** due March 4, 11:59 PM PST.

One of the most notable initiatives that the SPER Executive Committee has voted to undertake is the formation of an Equity Advisory Board. Equity is critical for meeting the mission of our society. The Outreach and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of SPER developed the Equity Advisory Board to help ensure that SPER keeps equity and inclusion front and center across all society activities. I am incredibly grateful to Claire Margerison, Jaime Slaughter-Acey, and all of the committee members for their commitment to equity and developing this important group. Please see Claire's update below for details about this new initiative.

Our Members at Large, Claire Margerison (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee), Audrey Gaskins (Outreach Committee), Anne Marie Jukic (Digital Engagement Committee), and Nicole Talge (Communications Committee, who has now rotated off the board) have worked hard this past year. Below are the summaries of their initiatives, put together by our new Member at Large, Theresa Chapple. I'm happy to share more information about these developments. As always, keep an eye out for announcements on our website (<https://sper.org>), email, and on Twitter @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 comments.

Lisa Bodnar, PhD, RD

**Join us for the
SPER 35th Annual Meeting**

Chicago, IL

June 13-14, 2022

Abstract Deadline*

Friday, January 28, 2022, 11:59 PM PST

* ***SPER membership is required at the time of submission.***

Award Nomination Deadlines

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| ● Travel Award to Promote Diversity | March 3, 2022 |
| ● Heinz Berendes International Travel Award | January 27, 2022 |
| ● Student Prize Paper Award | March 3, 2022 |
| ● Rising Star Award | March 3, 2022 |
| ● Mentoring Award | March 3, 2022 |

Highlights from the 34st Annual Meeting

June 21-22, 2021 – Boston, MA (Virtual Meeting)

Meeting archives available [\[here\]](#)

Meeting Quick Stats:

- Attendees at the Advanced Methods Workshop: 163
- Attendees at the Regular Meeting: 313

Day 1: Advanced Methods Workshop

The Student and Post-doc Working Group, under the leadership of Sonia Grandi (Chair of the Working Group at the time) successfully implemented an Advanced Methods Workshop, as part of the 2021 Annual Meeting. This well attended Workshop held on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 and comprised of two sessions: (a) “Effects of intergenerational exposure interventions on adolescent outcomes: an application of Inverse Probability Weighting (IPW) to prebirth cohort data,” led by Yu-Han Chiu (Harvard University); and (b) “Causal inference in pediatric and perinatal epidemiologic research: from questions to methods,” led by Jessica Young (Harvard University). Slides from both presentations are available for SPER members ([click here](#)).

Many thanks to our presenters!

Day 1: Symposium: – Pregnancy and COVID-19: Review of the evidence and methodological challenges for epidemiological studies of infection and vaccination

The 34th Annual Meeting opened with a symposium and panel discussion on COVID-19 illness and vaccination during pregnancy and reviewed some of the methodological challenges facing studies on these important topics. We thank Lindsay Collin (University of Utah) Emily Olsen (CDC COVID-19 Emergency Response) Kristin Palmsten (HealthPartners Institute) Christine Olson (CDC, VSAFE) David Savitz (Brown University) Maria Sundaram (University of Toronto) for their contributions to this informative panel.

Day 2: Plenary Sessions

The plenary sessions highlighted racial disparities in Maternal Morbidity and Mortality and provided thoughtful insights as to where the field needs to go to address these long-lasting disparities. Thank you Elizabeth Howell for your engaging talk! The plenary sessions covered a wide range of interesting research topics and with the virtual format we were able to offer more content than usual. Thank you to everyone who participated in these sessions!

2021 Award Recipients

Student Prize Paper Award: Timothy Nielson

- Doctoral student at Children's Hospital Westmead Clinical School at the University of Sydney in Sydney, Australia
- *Title:* Association of multiple maternal inflammatory exposures in pregnancy and child attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder by ten years of age: a population-based cohort study.

Travel Award to Promote Equity: Ixel Hernandez and Vivian Ukak

- Ixel Hernandez is currently an epidemiology doctoral student at the University of Southern California
- Vivian Ukak, who is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Epidemiology at McGill University

Rising Star Award: Audrey Gaskins

- Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at Emory University Rollins School of Public Health

Mentoring Award: Barbara Abrams

- Professor of Epidemiology, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health, and Public Health Nutrition at UC Berkeley

Help Shape the 2022 Annual Meeting

Submit your ideas for a symposium. Use this form to submit your proposal. Deadline for proposal is November 15, 2021 and they should very briefly include: topic, proposed speakers, and diversity consideration. Decisions will be made in January 2022.

Committee News

NEW Equity Advisory Board:

As of this fall, SPER has established a new Equity Advisory Board (EAB). For the past two years, the Outreach Committee has been primarily committed to initiatives and work aimed at creating a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment within SPER as an organization and at the SPER Annual Meeting. By creating an Equity Advisory Board that is separate from our other committees, we hope to integrate equity consistently across all aspects of SPER. The EAB will meet four times a year, with two of these meetings attended by chairs of all other committees, the President, President Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary. At this meeting, committee chairs and the President will present their plans for the next semester, ongoing projects, etc. and have an opportunity to ask questions and get feedback on how their plans address and incorporate principles of equity and inclusion. The EAB will also hold 1 to 2 Listening Sessions per year, which will be open to all current and prospective SPER members to give feedback on issues related to equity and inclusion.

We would like to thank the following members of the EAB for 2021-2022: Michelle Dimitris, Galit Dunietz, Irene Headen, Stephanie Leonard, Dawn Misra, and Ugochinyere Vivian Ukak. (All previous members of the Outreach committee were invited to join the EAB. Positions on the EAB will be open to all SPER members in 2022, with an application process.)

If you are interested in joining the EAB in 2022, or if you have any comments or questions related to our work or these topics, please do not hesitate to contact me (Claire Margerison) at margeris@msu.edu.

Student and Post-doc Working Group:

The Student and Post-doc Working Group now has a new Chair, Luther-King Fasehun. Luther-King Fasehun and other Working Group members are currently working with the SPER Executive Committee for the transition of the working group to a full Committee status. They have also held an open meeting with the Working Group membership, and will keep that ongoing every month. They are also planning an October 2021 joint Journal Club event with the Student/Post-doc Committee of the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER), while welcoming new members to their Working Group. They are also looking forward to future initiatives, including a mentorship program and a career development series. For the upcoming 2022 Advanced Methods Workshop, there is broad interest in methods used in COVID-19 research per perinatal and reproductive health outcomes. As always, the Student and Post-doc Working Group continually seeks new members, and they welcome ideas and commentaries for current and future initiatives.

We would like to thank the following members of The Working Group for 2021/2022: Krista Wollny, Michelle Dimitris, Danielle Stevens, Vivian Ukak, Sarah Twardowski, Asma Ahmed, Michelle Klawans, Hannah Murphy, Zohra Lassi, Abidemi Okechukwu, Sara Stephens, Kelly O'Shea, Ruth Geller, Chad Coleman, Patrick Seitzinger, Marlene Joannie Bewa, and Luther-King Fasehun.

Membership Renewal Time!

It's time to renew your SPER membership for 2022! 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), please complete the membership application on the SPER website ([click here](#)).

Welcome New Members of the Executive Committee	Thank you and Farewell Former Members of the Executive Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Jaime Slaughter-Acey (President Elect)– Theresa Chapple-McGruder (Member-at-large)– Luther-King Fasehun (Student Representative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Lauren Wise (Past President)– Nicole Talge (Member-at-large)– Sonia Grandi (Student Representative)

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