

SPER Newsletter (Fall 2023)

Executive Committee (2023-2024)

President:

Penelope (Penny) Howards

Past-President:

Jaime Slaughter-Acey

President-Elect:

Edwina Yeung

Secretary:

Helen Chin

Treasurer:

Candice Johnson

Members-at-Large:

Audrey Gaskins

Stefanie Hinkle

Stephanie Leonard

Kristen Rappazzo

International Representative:

Neda Razaz

Student Representative:

Sharonda Lovett

President's Corner

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the SPER Annual Meeting in Portland this year. I want to thank Jaime Slaughter-Acey for her leadership in organizing this meeting, which had the highest in-person attendance in SPER's history at 318 attendees. I would also like to thank Sue Bevan and her team for everything they do behind the scenes to ensure the meeting is a success. More information on the meeting is included on pages 5-9.



In the feedback on the 2023 Annual Meeting, people raised a wide range of topics that they would like to see represented at future meetings. All suggested topics would be welcomed. There are 3 ways that you can help promote a topic of interest: 1) submit a symposium proposal (deadline page 4), 2) submit and encourage others to submit relevant abstracts (deadline page 4), and 3) volunteer for the Program Committee. Symposia are sessions focused on a specific theme. They often cover emerging topics, controversies in the field, or topics that have been underrepresented at the Annual Meeting. When proposing symposia, it is helpful to define what the interrelated talks would cover and list potential speakers. We welcome symposium proposals from trainees as well as more senior SPER members. You can learn more at [SPER symposium submission](#).

I am excited to share that we are planning a Virtual Meeting that will take place this Spring. Please watch your e-mail for more information including the abstract submission deadline!

Starting on page 2, you will find a question and answer (Q&A) section that addresses feedback from the 2023 Business Meeting and the post-meeting survey. The questions addressed are only a sample of the topics raised, but we are considering all feedback that we have received. If your question has not been answered here, feel free to reach out to me or other members of the Executive Committee.

Finally, I would like to reiterate SPER's commitment to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion with respect to all aspects of the Society as well as the field of pediatric and perinatal epidemiology more broadly. We are always interested in hearing your input and welcome your involvement in our Equity Advisory Board. Please reach out to me or Stephanie Leonard, chair of the Equity Advisory Board, with questions and suggestions.

Table of Contents

2024 Annual Meeting-Related Q&A	2
2023 Annual Meeting Survey Feedback-Related Q&A	3
37th SPER Annual Meeting	4
Submission Deadlines	4
1st Annual SPER Virtual Meeting	4
SPER positions opening in 2024.....	5
Highlights from the 36th SPER Annual Meeting	5
Advanced Methods Workshop.....	5
Keynote Speaker	6
2023 SPER Award Recipients Congratulations to the winners of the 2023 SPER awards!	7
2023 Student/Trainee Poster Award Winners.....	8
Thank You to Outgoing SPER Executive Council Members	8
Welcome to Incoming SPER Executive Council Members	9
Recent and Upcoming Events	9
Join an SPER committee!	10
SPER on Social Media.....	10
Membership Renewal	11
Give to SPER	11
Sponsor the SPER Annual Meeting	11

2024 Annual Meeting-Related Q&A

1. I have concerns about traveling to Austin because of Texas laws related to reproductive healthcare or LGBTQIA+ rights. Can SPER change the meeting location?
 - Meeting contracts are signed 5 to 6 years in advance of a meeting, and the financial penalty for canceling the contract is prohibitive so we cannot change the meeting location.
2. If I do not attend the 2024 Annual Meeting, are there other ways that I can participate in the conference?
 - Yes, we are planning our first ever Virtual Pre-Conference Meeting in the Spring! People will be able to submit abstracts specifically for the virtual meeting. We will send more information soon.
3. Could SPER live stream Annual Meeting?
 - We explored this option and obtained a quote from the vendor. To cover the extra costs of live streaming the meeting, we would have to significantly increase the meeting registration fees while also charging the online attendees the full registration fees. The increased costs would

likely mean fewer people would be able to afford to attend the meeting. Therefore, we are not planning to live stream the meeting this year.

4. If live streaming is too expensive, could SPER record the Annual Meeting instead?
 - Although it might seem that recording the meeting would be a more economic option, the cost of recording the meeting is greater than the cost of live streaming the meeting because the same equipment is required and then there are additional expenses related to posting the recordings.

2023 Annual Meeting Survey Feedback-Related Q&A

1. Can we include pronouns on name tags at future meetings?
 - Yes, absolutely!
2. Will gender neutral bathrooms be available at future meetings?
 - We are contacting the hotel to see if this is possible.
3. Will there be a lactation room at future meetings?
 - We are contacting the hotel to see if this is possible, and we will discuss the specific issues raised in the post-meeting survey about the lactation room that was available in Portland.
4. Will there be captioning of talks at the Annual Meeting?
 - Unfortunately, captioning talks at the Annual Meeting in Austin is currently cost-prohibitive. However, we will continue to evaluate this going forward.
 - We do expect captioning to be available for the Virtual Meeting
5. Are sessions on [insert topic of interest to you here] welcome, and if so, why aren't there any?
 - Yes, a wide range of topics are welcome.
 - Most of the program is based on member submissions. If you would like to see a topic presented, we encourage you to submit a symposium proposal or abstract.
 - You can learn more by volunteering to be a member of the Program Committee. Watch for an e-mail asking for volunteers!
6. Can you make the lunchtime poster session more prominent?
 - We are exploring other times for the 2nd poster session this year.
7. Why don't we have more international and/or DEI travel awards?
 - Each new award requires a sponsor to fund it. If you or your institution would like to sponsor an award, please see the [sponsor SPER](#) or [donate to SPER](#) pages on our website for more information or contact SPER Treasurer Candice Johnson (candice.y.johnson@duke.edu).

8. When the NIH R13 is renewed, why don't you add more money to cover a virtual meeting or to cover more travel awards?
 - The NIH R13 grant only provides \$6,000. We use this money to fund the travel of the winners of the Heinz Berendes International Travel Award and the Student Prize Paper Award as well as the cost of the poster display boards. Maximizing the number of poster display boards is important because it increases the number of people who can present at the conference.
9. Can the annual dues be aligned with the date of the conference?
 - We have explored this issue in the past, and unfortunately, there are fiscal reasons that this is not possible at this time.
10. What opportunities are there for networking?
 - We launched a Welcoming Peer Program a few years ago, which matches new attendees (not limited to first-year attendees) with long-term members to facilitate networking.
 - The poster sessions are great times to meet people and talk about their research.
 - We are also exploring the possibility of adding virtual and/or in-person networking sessions this year (e.g., bringing back the breakfast roundtables).
11. Why doesn't SPER have a late breaker session?
 - Unfortunately, we do not have enough sessions to accommodate a late breaker session.

37th SPER Annual Meeting

June 17- 18, 2024 – Austin, TX

Submission Deadlines

Symposium: October 30th, 2023

Abstracts: January 22nd, 2024

All Award Nominations: January 29th, 2024

1st Annual SPER Virtual Meeting

Preliminary Date: April 16th 2024

Submission Deadlines

TBD

Please watch your e-mail for details coming soon!!!

SPER positions opening in 2024

We have several positions coming open in 2024. Please consider running or nominating someone to run for SPER office. The open positions will be, President (2024-2026), Member at Large for Outreach (2024-2028), and Student Representative (2024-2025). More details and a call for nominations will be coming in the winter.

Highlights from the 36th SPER Annual Meeting

June 12 - 13, 2023 – Portland, OR

[Meeting archives](#)

Annual Meeting Quick Stats

- Advanced Methods Workshop: 54 attendees
- Annual Meeting: 318 attendees
 - 45% trainees
 - 8% from countries other than the United States and Canada
- Abstracts submitted: 318
 - 56% authored by trainees
- Program
 - 4 symposia with 18 oral presentations
 - 6 concurrent contributed sessions with 29 oral presentations
- Pre-meeting membership: 405
 - 47% trainees

Advanced Methods Workshop

The year's Workshop focused on "Evaluating impacts of population shocks using an interrupted time series approach" led by Alison Gemmill of the Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health. [Presentation materials for past workshops](#) are available on the SPER website to members. Thank you to outgoing Student Representative Menolly Kaufman for organizing the event.

Keynote Speaker

We thank our keynote speaker Dr. Jessica Sanigaq Ullrich for her insightful presentation on her work on Indigenous connectedness and how children's health and wellbeing are impacted by connectedness and community.



2023 SPER Award Recipients
Congratulations to the winners of the 2023 SPER awards!

Heinz Berendes Award



Lin-Chieh Meng
Graduate Institute of Clinical Pharmacy
College of Medicine, National Taiwan
University

Paper: *Association Between Maternal Benzodiazepine or Z-Hypnotic Use in Early Pregnancy and the Risk of Stillbirth, Preterm Birth, and Small for Gestational Age*

Student Prize Paper



Safyer McKenzie-Sampson
Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics,
University of California San Francisco School of
Medicine, San Francisco, CA, USA

Paper: *Structural racism, nativity, and risk of adverse perinatal outcomes among Black women in California*

Rising Star Award



Neda Razaz, PhD, MPH
Clinical Epidemiology Division, Department of
Medicine, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm,
Sweden

Mentoring Award



Monique Hedderson, PhD, MPH
Kaiser Permanente Northern California Division of
Research

Travel Award to Promote Equity



Sharonda Lovett, MPH
Boston University School of Public Health

2023 Student/Trainee Poster Award Winners

1st Place

Gyeyoon Yim, ScD
Postdoctoral Scholar
Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth
University
“Metal co-exposures in relation to serum lipid levels during childhood in the Rhea mother-child cohort in Greece.”

2nd Place

Allison Sherris, PhD
Postdoctoral Scholar
University of Washington Department of
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences
“Prenatal exposure to ambient fine particulate matter and child lung function in the CANDLE cohort.”

Thank You to Outgoing SPER Executive Council Members



As President in 2022, **Lisa Bodnar** successfully ran our first in-person meeting since the pandemic started, and she continued to provide useful insights over the past year while serving as Past President.



The treasurer is one of the more demanding positions on the Executive Council, but **Erinn Hade** was extremely committed and ensured that the Society stayed solvent, which is no easy task for a small society.



Anne Marie Jukic used her position as Member-at-Large to ensure we had successful elections and built our digital engagement content from almost nothing. (Members can [access recordings of past digital engagement events.](#))



Bola Grace not only chaired the Equity Advisory Board over the past year, but she also organized a listening session for the Society’s membership at large and brought insights about equity to the Executive Committee meetings.



Siri Håberg provided an international perspective to the Executive Committee and co-organized and shared information on the inaugural European Perinatal and Pediatric Epidemiology Conference (see page 9).



Menolly Kaufman shared insights from the student perspective on the Society, and she organized the Methods Workshop (see page 5).

Welcome to Incoming SPER Executive Council Members



President Elect
Edwina Yeung

Treasurer
Candice Johnson



Member-at-Large
(Elections & Digital Engagement)
Stefanie Hinkle

Member-at-Large
(Equity Advisory Board)
Stephanie Leonard



International Representative
Neda Razaz

Student Representative
Sharonda Lovett



Recent and Upcoming Events

On September 19th SPER held its first Fall 2023 online event, a symposium examining “**Smokers, Breastfeeding, and Growth During Infancy.**” We hope you were there!

On September 28th we look forward to the first ever **European Perinatal and Pediatric Epidemiology Conference (EPEC)** held in beautiful Stockholm, Sweden. In this first European conference in perinatal and pediatric epidemiology, the organizers wish to create an arena for collaboration, development and fostering of perinatal and pediatric epidemiological research in Europe as well as world-wide by bringing together world-class researchers in the field. The conference is aimed at researchers interested in epidemiologic research applied on life-course epidemiology combined with reproduction, and child health.

Join an SPER committee!

[SPER committee webpage](#)

Program Committee

The Program Committee helps plan the annual meeting. Committee members identify topics for Concurrent Contributed Sessions and select presentations for these sessions from submitted abstracts. A call for volunteers will be announced in the coming weeks.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is responsible for social media engagement and policy, we are always open to new members! [Join the communications committee here.](#) We would also love to get members thoughts on how SPER communicates. Please email MAL Kristen Rappazzo (krappazzo@gmail.com).

Digital Engagement Committee (DEC)

The DEC organizes virtual events and webinars and is looking for volunteers to help for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. If you'd like to volunteer for the DEC, please go to [join the digital engagement committee page here.](#)

Outreach Committee

The purpose of the Outreach Committee is to promote awareness and accessibility of the Society to help grow the membership. The Committee has responsibility for overseeing initiatives aimed at recruitment of new members and retention of existing members and expanding the Society's reach. As a newer committee, we are looking for more people to join our group, particularly those from diverse backgrounds. [Contact or join the outreach committee here.](#)

Student & Post-Doc Working Group

The Student and Post-Doc Working Group facilitates the educational experiences and professional development of trainees in pediatric and perinatal epidemiology-related disciplines. We engage trainees in events focused on the exchange of research ideas/information, plan the [Advanced Methods Workshop](#) during the annual meeting, and promote student engagement within the Society. Join your fellow epidemiology trainees to help plan journal clubs and networking opportunities. Time commitment is minimal and it's a great way to connect with trainees across the country. [Join the student and post-doc committee here.](#)

Equity Advisory Board

The Equity Advisory Board (EAB) aims to provide leadership and guidance on all aspects of SPER with a goal of promoting equity in our professional organization and the field of pediatric, perinatal, & reproductive epidemiology. [Join the Equity Advisory Board here.](#)

SPER on Social Media

SPER is not currently active on X (formerly Twitter). We are considering alternative social media platforms and are developing a LinkedIn page. Our Facebook page (search: SPER) will remain for general announcements. Future announcements will primarily be through email, please make sure we are not on a spam list!

Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your SPER membership for 2024! Benefits include discounted registration rates for the annual meeting; opportunities to serve on committees, review abstracts and be a poster judge; 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), [the SPER membership application can be found here](#). Reminder that SPER memberships run from January 1st to December 31st (no matter when you renew), please renew early for more SPER value!

Give to SPER

Fund the future and support our mission to foster pediatric and perinatal epidemiologic research! Donated funds will be used to support our annual meeting, student travel awards and memberships, and expanded programming throughout the year.

SPER is a Non-Profit 501c(3) organization, so your donations may be tax deductible.

[Donate to SPER here!](#)

Sponsor the SPER Annual Meeting

Support SPER and promote your organization! Sponsorships are available at the Full (\$750) and Email (\$350) levels. [Details on sponsoring the SPER annual meeting available here.](#)