



**Executive Committee  
(2023-2024)**

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Penelope (Penny) Howards

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Edwina Yeung

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**International  
Representative:**

Neda Razaz

**Trainee Representative:**

Sharonda Lovett

**Administrator:**

Sue Bevan

# SPER Winter Newsletter

## President's Corner

I am excited to share with you what we have been working on this year. First, I would like to thank those of you who responded to my Program Committee Volunteer Survey in the fall. Two of the three committees have now met, and I will be reaching out to volunteers for the Annual Meeting Program Committee soon.

### Virtual Meeting

As I hope you have heard by now, this year we are sponsoring the first SPER Virtual Meeting, which will take place on April 16<sup>th</sup>. As I write, the Virtual Meeting Program Committee is in the process of putting together four sessions from the abstracts submitted for the Virtual Meeting. In addition to these sessions, Sharonda Lovett, our (amazing) trainee representative, is developing a mentoring/networking session for trainees. If she reaches out to you, I hope you will consider participating. Feel free to reach out to Sharonda or me if you would like to volunteer.



One of the primary goals of the Virtual Meeting is to improve accessibility and inclusion of the Society. To that end, the Virtual Meeting is free to anyone interested in attending. Neither attendees nor presenters are required to be members, so *please share information about the meeting widely.*

### Annual Meeting

I am delighted to announce that Dr. Elena Fuentes-Afflick has agreed to be the keynote speaker at our Annual Meeting. Dr. Fuentes-Afflick is the Vice Dean for the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco. Her research has focused on acculturation, immigrant health, and health disparities, especially in Latinx populations. In addition, her scholarship has highlighted the importance of increasing diversity in academia.

The Symposium Selection Committee met in December and selected three distinct and interesting symposia for the Annual Meeting:

- Fathers Matter: Black Fathers' Involvement in Pregnancy and Beyond
- Promises and Pitfalls of Sibling Designs in Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology
- Severe Maternal Morbidity

It will be difficult to decide which session to attend!

Abstract review is currently in progress for the Annual Meeting with over 250 abstracts under consideration. Thank you to those of you completing the reviews! As I mentioned above, I will be forming the Annual Meeting Program Committee soon. Please keep an eye out for my email if you completed the Program Committee Volunteer Survey in the Fall and haven't already served on one of the committees yet.

We are also in the process of putting together an opening night panel for the Annual Meeting. The tentative title is Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Morbidity and Mortality: Where Do We Go from Here?

Finally, this year we will be presenting at least one professional development panel during lunch. Based on trainee feedback, Sharonda Lovett is developing a panel focused on career paths outside academia. Again, if she reaches out to you, I hope you will consider participating. Feel free to reach out to Sharonda or me if you would like to volunteer.

### **Website**

If you have visited the SPER website recently, you may have noticed some changes. In response to member feedback, Sue Bevan and her team are working on updating the SPER website with a focus on improving clarity and ease of navigation.

I am grateful for the commitment of the members of the SPER Executive Committee, the engagement of the SPER membership, and the support of Sue Bevan and her team. Thank you for your contributions to the Society!

Penny Howards

**Penelope Howards, PhD**

*SPER President*

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## 1st SPER Virtual Meeting

The 1<sup>st</sup> SPER Virtual Meeting will be held on April 16, 2024, from 10:00 – 5:00pm EST. Registration is now open (and free). Thank you to all who submitted abstracts! To register: [Virtual Meeting – SPER](#)

## Register Now: 2024 SPER Annual Meeting

June 17 – 18, 2024

Austin, Texas



### Registration Information

#### Advanced Methods Workshop:

Register now for the 2024 SPER Advanced Methods Workshop on with sessions led by Dr. Angela Bengston and Dr. Chantel Martin. **This workshop will immediately precede the SPER Annual Meeting on Monday, June 17 from 12:00 – 2:30pm CDT.** To learn more, please go to the [SPER Advanced Methods Workshop page](#).

#### Annual Meeting:

Registration is now open ([SPER Registration page](#)). Registration fees for the Annual Meeting includes admission to all sessions (keynote, other oral sessions, and the poster sessions), continental breakfast, and refreshment breaks. **The annual meeting will begin on Monday, June 17, following the Advanced Methods Workshop and finish on Tuesday, June 18.**

### **[Register for the Advanced Methods Workshop and Annual Meeting!](#)**

The deadline for early registration (and discounted cost) is **Wednesday, May 15**. Please join us.

### **Accommodations**

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Austin Marriott Downtown, the venue for our 2024 Annual Meeting. [Hotel information and special rate](#) are available through the SPER website.

### **Volunteers Needed: Poster Judges and Welcoming Peers!**

Get to know the next generation of reproductive, pediatric, and perinatal epidemiologists by volunteering to serve as a poster judge or peer mentor at the upcoming Annual Meeting. Poster judges involvement would entail visiting presentations during one of the two scheduled poster sessions, sign up through the meeting registration form.

Welcoming peers at the annual meeting are matched with new attendees and facilitate a positive meeting experience. Both welcoming peers and new meeting attendees can opt in during meeting registration.

### **Thank you to our Planning Committee volunteers!**

#### **Symposium Selection Committee**

Samantha Lain, Asma Ahmef, Farah Qureshi, Diana Pacyga, Angela Bengtson, Molly Hoffman, Carey Drews-Botsch, Collette Ncube, Anne Marie Jukic, Nichole Nidey, Catherine Vladutiu

#### **Virtual Meeting Program Committee**

Denise Simon, Lisa Currie, Amelia Wesselink, Emine Bircan, Andrew Williams, Shan Xuan Lim, Diana Haggerty, Sarah LaPointe

#### **Professional Development Panel Committee**

Sharonda Lovett, Sara Stephens, Maria Cinzori, Alexandra Jean-Louis

## European Perinatal and Pediatric Epidemiology Conference (EPEC)

We are thrilled to welcome you to the second **E**uropean **P**erinatal and **P**ediatric **E**pidemiology **C**onference (EPPEC) to be held on September 16-17, 2024, in lovely Copenhagen, Denmark. The EPPEC conference provides a meeting platform for senior and junior researchers, who are passionate about applying epidemiologic methods to reproduction, child health, and life-course research, in Europe and elsewhere.

We have eminent keynote speakers, who are all prominent researchers within their respective fields, lined up for you. Additionally, we are excited to provide a dedicated space in the program for talented young researchers, offering them an opportunity to present their work and contribute to the collective knowledge of the community.

Confirmed speakers for the conference, in alphabetical order are:

**Olga Basso, Janine Felix, Andrea Ganni, Tine Brink Henriksen, Deborah A Lawlor, Robert Platt, Olof Stephansson and Edoardo Villamor.**

Please visit [the EPPEC website](#) for more information

## Nominate and Vote for Executive Committee Members!

*Executive Committee Nominations due March 14, 2024*

Nominations are being sought for President (2024-2027), one Member-at-Large (2024-2028), and SPER Trainee Representative (2024-2025). All terms will begin at the close of the June 2024 Annual Meeting. Members of SPER are encouraged to nominate themselves or any other member of SPER to run for these positions and help our Society achieve continued success through this opportunity for professional service.

The **President** will serve as President Elect (2024-2025), President (2025-2026), and Past President (2026-2027). The main duties of the President-Elect are to oversee the awards process for the Mentoring Award, the Rising Star Award, and the Trainee Prize Award. The President oversees the program planning for the Annual Meeting and the Virtual Meeting and is responsible for the Executive Committee's decision-making. The Past President chairs the selection of the Heinz Berendes International Travel Award recipient.

The **Member-at-Large** participates in Executive Committee meetings and activities. The Member-at-Large elected this cycle will be responsible for managing the Outreach Committee. This member will replace Audrey Gaskins.

The **Trainee Representative** participates in Executive Committee meetings; encourages and facilitates trainee participation in SPER activities; plans the Advanced Methods Workshop, which precedes the

Annual Meeting; and works with the President to organize mentoring and networking sessions during the meetings. This member will replace Sharonda Lovett.

This call for nominations is posted on the SPER website ([SPER Call For Nominations](#)). Nominations are due by **March 15, 2024**, and should be sent to Stefanie Hinkle at [stefanie.hinkle@penndent.upenn.edu](mailto:stefanie.hinkle@penndent.upenn.edu) or can be submitted online through the SPER website. Nominees will be asked to submit a candidate statement by the above deadline. You can also contact Stefanie by email for more information. The slate of candidates and ballot will be presented to the SPER membership for electronic voting to take place in April 2024.

## Upcoming Events

See [SPER's Online Events page](#) for details and registration links!

- **March 4, 2024**, from 4:00 – 5:00pm EST / 1:00 – 2:00pm PST: The SPER Equity Advisory Board (EAB) will be hosting its annual open listening session through Zoom (link below). We hope you will be able to join us and consider sharing your perspectives, which will guide our activities during the coming year. If you would like to receive a calendar invitation, please email Stephanie Leonard at [stephanie.leonard@stanford.edu](mailto:stephanie.leonard@stanford.edu). [EAB Listening Session Zoom](#).
- **April 16, 2024**, from 10:00 – 5:00pm EST: 1<sup>st</sup> Virtual Meeting
- **May 21, 2024**, from 12:00 – 1:00pm EDT: Gender- and relationship-inclusive language in perinatal epidemiology: Opportunities for increasing methodological and substantive precision

## Join a Committee! Opportunities for Member Involvement and Leadership

Are you interested in getting more involved in SPER? Consider joining one of our five committees!

- **Communications Committee**, working to shape our social media presence, newsletters, and communications policies.
- **Outreach Committee**, promoting awareness and increasing accessibility of the Society to help grow the membership. This committee has the responsibility of overseeing initiatives aimed at recruitment of new members, retention of existing members, and expanding the Society's reach. We are looking for more people to join our group, particularly those from diverse backgrounds.
- **Digital Engagement Committee**, coordinating our online seminar series throughout the year.
- **Equity Advisory Board (EAB)**, intersects with all aspects of SPER programming and activities to ensure that equity is prioritized. The EAB meets monthly to review existing SPER activities and programming and to develop new initiatives to promote equity.

- **Student, Trainee, & Post-Doc Working Group**, plans professional development opportunities for trainees in pediatric and perinatal epidemiology-related disciplines and promotes student/trainee/postdoctoral engagement with the Society.

Click here to access more [information on SPER committees](#) as well as the links to join them.

## Membership Renewal Time

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), applications and renewals can be found on the [SPER Membership page](#). Reminder that SPER memberships run from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> (no matter when you renew), so renew early for more SPER value!

## Looking for a job or fellowship? Recruiting for a position?

Explore the [SPER Jobs & Fellowships Bank](#). It currently has 11 listings, which include advertisements for postdoctoral fellowships and professorships. Check back regularly for timely access to these opportunities.

If you are looking to hire an epidemiologist with expertise in perinatal and/or pediatric health and would like to advertise your position on the SPER website, please [submit your contribution here](#).

## SPER Members in the News Highlights

Members of the Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research (SPER) do a lot of fantastic research and we would love to highlight the work that everyone is doing! We invite members (and especially student, trainee, and post-doctoral members) to provide information about recent media reports covering their work or quoting them, publications, or major events (awards, dissertation defense announcements) for the SPER Communications LinkedIn and Facebook pages to promote and share. Please fill out [the SPER Members in the News form](#) if you'd like to be highlighted!



## 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.](#)

## Follow SPER

SPER is currently active on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#), follow/connect with us for society updates and information!



SPER Communications



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