

The APPPAH Newsletter

News From the First Frontier: Conception To Birth

Official Bulletin of the Association for Prenatal & Perinatal Psychology & Health, Fall 2010

Int'l Congress Spotlight On:

The Thomas R. Verny Award for Outstanding Contributions to Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health

Awarded in 2010 to Stanislav Grof, M.D.

Stan Grof is a pioneering researcher who examined the effects of birth trauma and the roots of anxiety through his well-known LSD (and later breathwork) investigations. Describing the phenomenon that he labeled the BIRTH COEX-system (COEX: "COndensed EXperience" of constellations of early traumas), Grof also confirmed that reliving the birth experience can be a powerful healing process in treating psychopathology. Thus, he has been chosen to receive this year's Thomas R. Verny Award. The recognition ceremony followed by his address on "Implications of the Prenatal and Perinatal Period for Psychology: Observations from Modern Consciousness Research" will be a highlight of the 2010 APPPAH International Congress. (Dr. Grof will also be offering a workshop entitled: "Psychospiritual Death and Rebirth: A Visionary Journey.")

Dr. Grof is a psychiatrist with more than five decades of experience in research of non-ordinary states of consciousness. In the past, he was Principal Investigator in a psychedelic research program at the Psychiatric Research Institute in Prague, Czechoslovakia; Chief of Psychiatric Research at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center; Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland; and Scholar-in-Residence at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. Currently, he is a professor of psychology in the department of Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco and conducts professional training programs in holotropic breathwork and transpersonal psychology at Wisdom University in Oakland, CA. He gives lectures and seminars worldwide, and is one of the founders and chief theoreticians of transpersonal psychology and the founding president of the International Transpersonal Association (ITA).

Among his publications are over 140 papers in professional journals, as well as the books *Realms of the Human Unconscious*; *LSD Psychotherapy*; *The Adventure of Self-Discovery*; *Beyond the Brain*; *Books of the Dead*; *The Holotropic Mind*; *The Cosmic Game*; *The Consciousness Revolution* (with Ervin Laszlo and Peter Russell); *Psychology of the Future*; *The Ultimate Journey*; *When the Impossible Happens*; *Beyond Death*; and *The Stormy Search for the Self* (the last two with Christina Grof). He also edited the books *Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*; *Consciousness Evolution and Human Survival*; and *Spiritual Emergency* (the last with Christina Grof). -- B.J. Lyman

☞ See "The Tradition of The Thomas R. Verny Award" on page 3 ☞

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Letter from the President



Dear APPPAH Members and Non-Members,
Whenever I am traveling the world and lecturing about prenatal and perinatal psychology, people often ask me, “How do you know opinion X or Y to be true?” or “How do you know if birth has long term impacts?” They accept the answers when research is openly shared and critiqued. The upcoming International APPPAH Congress at Asilomar Conference Grounds provides the best answers to the questions consumers ask, conveying the highest quality empirical and scientific studies in the field, the kind that would convince anyone to embrace our field and what it has to offer.

The research-based studies and conclusions are presented by world class speakers who can articulate and elaborate some of the important implications of the research for various settings like hospitals, schools, homes, birth centers, psychotherapy offices, etc. Because of the unique nature of this particular International Congress, I strongly encourage you to attend, Nov 11-14, 2010, to help us spread the word and enact world-changing interventions in our cultural institutions and homes.

Goals of this year's Congress include:

- To raise awareness of empirical research in the field of prenatal and birth (perinatal) psychology at the international level;
- To summarize and synthesize the highest quality and most recent empirical research, vitalizing the credibility of this field;
- To disseminate the research and stimulate discussion in support of prenatal and birth psychological services (prevention/intervention) as well as to influence social action policies;
- To integrate within a scientific approach what we know about wisdom and intuitive knowledge, the study of consciousness, and the deep appreciation and respect we have for those we touch in our work—their experiences, their stories, their uniqueness.

A good example of APPPAH's intent to promote research-based procedures is the current project “Welcome Your Baby In With 60 Minutes, Skin-to-Skin,” inspired by last year's Congress presentation by Marshall Klaus about research done by Dr. Bystrova in Russia. The research proves that early and sustained skin-to-skin contact provides much better post partum and 1st year results (physical and emotional) for both baby and mother.

While violence was not an outcome variable studied by Bystrova, other research makes a clear connection between poor bonding and the propensity for violence in childhood and adulthood. There could be no better time in the history of the world to focus on prevention of violence, beginning with the prenatal and perinatal experience. At this Congress, APPPAH members Chasse and Hirsch offer communication training to support how we spread the message of skin-to-skin interventions. CEU training for practitioners is also being planned. If you have not yet responded to our member survey – please [click here](#) to do so, it takes only the fewest minutes – or contact: Jill D. Chasse <baby_counselor@yahoo.com>, or Rochele HC Hirsch <rochelehc@gmail.com>.

I am looking forward to welcoming you at this ground-breaking Congress.

In your Service,

William R. Emerson, Ph.D.
President, APPPAH

The Tradition of The Thomas R. Verny Award

This centerpiece of APPPAH's International Congresses began as a surprise announcement at the Atlanta Congress in 1991, when Thomas Verny, the Toronto psychiatrist who was the visionary founder and first president of the Association, retired from the presidency after eight years of service. APPPAH's board revealed that it had secretly established the "Thomas R. Verny Prize"—to be given every two years in Dr. Verny's honor to someone making extraordinary contributions to prenatal and perinatal psychology. (cont. on page 3)

(Cont. from Pg. 1)

In making the announcement, David Chamberlain presented Thomas with the first such APPPAH "Oscar," a dark stone statuette of Imhotep, chosen to symbolize virtuosity in leadership and public service. The real Imhotep was an extraordinary Egyptian physician, writer, scholar, and advisor to pharaohs circa 500 B.C. Imhotep's influence was so great that succeeding generations of Egyptians were not sure if he had been human or divine! The gold-framed citation read,

The Board of Directors presents the first Association "Oscar" to Thomas R. Verny, M.D., D.Psych., physician, psychologist, scholar, valued advisor, communicator to the multitudes, and accoucheur to pre- and perinatal psychology. We honor you today, July 19, 1991 at the 5th Congress in Atlanta, Georgia.

Register Now!

APPPAH's XV International Congress

Embracing the Science of Prenatal and Birth Psychology:

What We Know, How We Know It

November 11-14, 2010

Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, California

www.birthpsychology.com/congress/2010/intlCongress.html

Interesting Topic to Discuss at the Congress?

If you are a registered (or will be a registered) attendee at the 2010 Congress at Asilomar this year, would you be interested in leading a luncheon table discussion on a topic related to prenatal or perinatal psychology & health? Great—we'd love you to apply to host!

Here are the steps: 1) choose a topic within our field that would be of interest and suitable for a discussion format; 2) write up a brief proposal (see example below); 3) email your proposal, or any questions, to Jeane Rhodes by October 15, 2010.

drjeane@gmail.com

These lunch discussions have been well attended in the past, as meeting and discussing our own passions with like-minded individuals can be an exhilarating experience. Send in your submission today.

Submission example: Jeane Rhodes, PhD - *Birth Imagery in Sandplay* - Discussion will center on sandplay figures and scenes that may be associated with a client's birth experience and how to work with this imagery. Sample figures and illustrations will be used to facilitate the discussion.

Celebrating Journal Milestones

Helping to chart the expanding territory of prenatal and perinatal psychology since 1985 has been the mission of our Association journal. Every step of the way has been made possible by the vision and ingenuity of the editors and the dedication of the supporting staff working closely with a host of authors contributing to 25 volumes—that's 100 issues. Together we celebrate the 25th year of publication since Thomas VERNY founded the Journal.

Retiring at this time is Editor-in-Chief Bobbi Jo (B.J.) Lyman, PhD, after supervising no fewer than 30 issues—a record she shares with her immediate predecessor, Ruth Johnson Carter, PhD. Both of these editors were in turn supported by unusually strong associate editors, which undoubtedly helped them to accomplish so much. Ruth was assisted by Dr. Jenny Wade, as was B.J. by Dr. Jeane Rhodes and Dr. Anne Maiden Brown.

Looking back on her experience as Editor-in-Chief, Bobbi Jo exclaimed that "it was and will remain one of the highlights of my life!" B.J. serves on the core faculty at Santa Barbara Graduate Institute and is the author of the book, *Prenatal and Birth Memories* (2007). Following B.J.'s announcement to retire, and after a short search, the APPPAH Board of Directors invited Jeane Marie Rhodes, PhD, to become *JOPPPAH's* new Editor-in-Chief. In accepting, Jeane responded that this was an ideal time in her life to take on this exciting responsibility.

However, Jeane will *not* be working alone. For the last eight years APPPAH has had in place an editorial team that includes the following positions: *Associate Editor*—Due to the recent resignation of Dr. Brown for health reasons, a search is currently underway to find this editor

who carries responsibility for the journal's peer review process and occasionally has the opportunity to produce special issues of the journal; *Managing Editor*—sees each new issue through to final digital printing and distribution (a position temporarily filled by APPPAH Executive Director Maureen Wolfe since Winter of 2000—might YOU be the missing understudy perfect for this position?); and the *Book Review Editor*, Bronwyn Chambers, who coordinates the system for reviewing new books for the APPPAH community—an indispensable service that links authors and members. This is the full team of editors who stand behind the Editor-in-Chief. Three cheers for The Team!

Our new Editor-in-Chief has been actively involved with the journal over several years, contributing two articles, two book reviews, and two clinical articles for *Sharing Space*. Jeane earned an early PPN doctorate from The Union Institute in 1997 with the dissertation *Aware Beginnings: Body Language and Birth Memory (Through the Lens of the Ancient Practice of Yoga Asana)*. She is a licensed professional counselor in private practice in Colorado and has taught at Red Rocks Community College and online courses for Santa Barbara Graduate Institute. In 2009 she published the inspiring novel *The Birth of Hope*, educating the public about real-life prenatal and birth psychology.

The first journal issue published under Jeane's leadership is already completed as Vol. 24 (3), Spring 2010, and is in the hands of the Managing Editor. Please watch for it!

-- Submitted by David Chamberlain

Invitation: Join Our Team of JOPPPAH Book Reviewers

Thank you to those who have stepped up to serve as book reviewers for the Journal! There is still the opportunity for a few more: JOPPPAH is looking for interesting folks—those with training, expertise or even just a strong conceptual foothold in the field of prenatal and perinatal psychology—interested in writing book reviews for the Journal. In as many issues as possible, JOPPPAH tries to inform readers in approximately 600–1000 words about what's being written in the field. This is where you come in: if you love to read and feel inclined to share your thoughts with your peers, do your bit and volunteer to become a book reviewer. You even get to keep the books! Call Bronwyn at 818–224–0305 or email jopppah.chambers@gmail.com

Briefly Noted ~ Books & Movies Members Recommend

Get Me Out: A History of Childbirth from the Garden of Eden to the Sperm Bank,

Randi Hutter Epstein, M.D. (2010). NY, WW Norton and Company. 302 pages, ISBN 978-0-393-06458-2

I heard this author speaking about her new book on NPR radio's *Fresh Air* program in early February, 2010, and stopped the car to listen to the remainder of the show. A few weeks later, I was given the book as a gift by my daughter's boyfriend who knows of my PPN interest. It is a great read regardless of your orientation to PPN, childbirth, fertility, and health. Hutter Epstein

is a female medical doctor and writer as well as a mother. With the baby boom “echo” of the original baby boomers going on these days, this author’s book hit the stands at a perfect time in American birthing history! The book is chock full of pertinent birth history and facts. While much of the history of childbirth is horrifying, Hutter Epstein has a wonderful sense of humor that she uses judiciously to lighten up the intensity of it all. The gruesome details of obstetrical interventions and contraptions created to “ease” birth problems, as well as the descriptive history of how unskilled male barber surgeons, and later medical doctors, took over the birthing business from midwives, is harrowing and horrifying at times. One can really sense how birth HERstory became birth HISTory! We learn how slave women were exploited to develop the speculum. We learn about fads that became wide scale practices for a time, such as “twilight sleep,” and the ingestion of monkey sperm as a male “pick me up” virility technique along with injecting guinea pig and dog testicles for male hormone rejuvenation. We learn about the earliest c-sections and how Caesar had nothing to do with the operation, which was later deemed a “procedure” to make it more palatable to women. There is a sad trip down memory lane covering the use of DES, and then onward in time into the technologies so many of us in APPPAH are familiar with encountering nowadays. Hooray for this author for creating a book for the masses to read and ponder as they begin to suss out how they want their own families’ birthing experiences to go! Now millions of people can learn that what they consider “traditional” or “normal” practices in United States birthing scenarios is really just another craze related to efforts to make improvements or obtain power and control in a medical field. *—Reviewed by Ellynn Skove*

Babies, Thomas Balmès. Focus Features, distributor. (May, 2010)

[Review excerpts from [USA Today](#), by Jessica Puig] This observant documentary offers an up-close-and-personal glimpse of four babies from vastly different cultures in their first year of life. It’s not a traditional documentary; there’s no narration, subtitles or scientific information imparted. There’s far more gurgling and cooing than dialogue. The developmental similarities are there, but it’s the differences in behavior and circumstances that jump out. We meet the easygoing Ponijao, her mother and other members of her Himba tribe outside her family’s dirt hut in Namibia. Curious Bayarjargal lives with his parents and siblings and a herd of cattle on their farm in remote Mongolia. Mari has a toy-filled existence in a small apartment with her parents in Tokyo. Hattie lives a pampered American life in San Francisco with parents. She is taken to baby yoga, and a book titled *No Hitting* sits prominently on a bookshelf. Ponijao and other tribal children share easily, Bayarjargal and his brother squabble, but their parents generally let them work it out. Mari doesn’t have as much chance to interact with other babies, but gets frustrated by the bevy of educational toys set out to amuse her. Some of the most riveting moments in this cinematic scrapbook are those most removed from American experience. Bayarjargal lies swaddled on his back, watching raptly as a colorful rooster parades around his bed, perilously close to stepping on the infant. When old enough to crawl, he fearlessly makes his way into a herd of cattle. No one is around to swoop him up. But the cows step around him and the boy obliviously ambles off. Ponijao exchanges a kiss with a roaming dog. Ponijao and her family seem the most content, though their circumstances are easily the most meager. This could be because of Balmès’ Rousseau-like belief in the nobility of those living closest to the natural state. There does seem to be this subtle point of view, based on his scenes chosen from the 400 hours of footage shot. The procession of youthful behavior is almost hypnotic, but *Babies* is delivered with refreshing immediacy and joyful humor.

APPPAH member **Karen Strange** adds, “Just saw this cute, sweet movie. No plot, no narration, just babies from 4 countries. Nothing sad, or bad or wrong (my kind of movie)—just babies. Pleasant and nice to see. If you love babies, go and see this!

Invest a Moment, Add Your Voice To A Beautiful Movement

“Redesigning society for the greatest good by meeting the priority needs of the very young.”

– Raffi Cavoukian

Crowning his tireless efforts on behalf of the championship of youth, beloved children’s troubadour and peace activist Raffi Cavoukian has founded the Centre for Child Honouring on Salt Spring Island, BC. Just as Raffi has been a good friend and supporter of APPPAH in recent years, let us support his fine efforts as well—as they are all devoted to the same important ideal! Take a quick moment to go to the Child Honouring website and “[Sign the Plea](#)”—calling on leaders of all faiths to unite in ending violence to children. As Raffi writes in his letter to us all,

“We trust that a massive outpouring of public and religious support for respecting the personhood of children would:

- a) have significantly beneficial impacts on behaviour in families, communities, schools and institutions worldwide, and
- b) bring renewed awareness and support for implementing the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Such an outpouring could also spark a historic multi-faith decree upholding the sanctity of the child, and urging the elimination of physical, mental and emotional violence against children. Such a new religious moment would be a vital step forward towards a new era of peace with and for our young.”

Conference of Interest

THE 13TH WORLD CONGRESS ON CONTROVERSIES IN OBSTETRICS, GYNECOLOGY & INFERTILITY (COGI) | Maritim Hotel, Berlin, Germany, November 4-7, 2010 | Early registration deadline 7/31/10 | Abstract deadline 6/30/10 | <http://www.comtecmed.com/cogi/berlin/Default.aspx>

Resources of Note

March Of Dimes Toolkit On Elective Deliveries

The March of Dimes, in collaboration with the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative and the California Department of Health, Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Division, has created a quality improvement toolkit. “Elimination of Non-Medically Indicated (Elective) Deliveries Before 39 Weeks Gestational Age” was developed in order to support hospitals, and includes a comprehensive literature review about the importance of eliminating elective deliveries before 39 weeks. It offers excellent educational resources for conveying the message to parents of the importance of every week of pregnancy. It also contains a step-by-step guide to assist hospital leaders with implementation efforts and a guide for measuring quality improvement effectiveness over time. The kits’ appendices include sample forms and hospital case studies. For more information on the kit, and other tools for clinicians, staff, and patients/consumers, go to http://www.marchofdimes.com/prematurity/index_professionals_66663.asp or download a free copy of the toolkit at http://www.marchofdimes.com/files/_39_Weeks_Toolkit.pdf. A more city-specific approach can be found in *Public Citizen’s* “[Guide to Avoiding Unnecessary Cesarean Sections in New York State](#)” and the [responses from three health professionals](#).

The Premie Parent’s Survival Guide To The NICU

Premie Magazine founder and former publisher Deb Discenza has teamed up with award-winning director/producer Nicole Conn to create a new guide for parents of preemies, *The Premie Parent’s Survival Guide to the NICU*. The goal of the book is to share the information that they would have wanted to receive when their babies were hospitalized in the neonatal ICU. Learn more about the project, and access information, resources and support, their shared website, www.premieworld.com. [Courtesy of Judy Meehan at the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition]

APPPAH-Friendly Federal Research Grant

Emma Miller passes on news of this important funding resource, relevant to those who “...conduct research on reproductive, developmental, behavioral, social, and rehabilitative processes that determine the health or functioning of newborns, infants...”

HHS

Department of Health and Human Services

National Institutes of Health

NICHD Program Project Grant (P01)

<http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&oppId=56310>

Breastfeeding Report Card From CDC

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released its 2010 Breastfeeding Report Card which provides state-by-state data for use by organizations and individuals to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. According to the Report Card, three out of every four new mothers in the US starts out breastfeeding. However, breastfeeding rates for children 6 and 12 months and rates of exclusive breastfeeding at 3 and 6 months remain low. These show that while mothers in the US want to breastfeed and are trying to do so, they also face multiple

barriers to breastfeeding. For more information, access the 2010 Breastfeeding Report Card at <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm>

Fact Sheet: Break Time For Nursing Mothers

A new fact sheet from the U.S. Department of Labor provides information on break time requirements for nursing mothers that are now in effect as a result of passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). These requirements took effect when the PPACA was signed into law in March 2010. The fact sheet outlines the general provisions of the law, noting that “employers are required to provide reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year after the child’s birth each time the employee has need to express the milk.” Employers must also provide “a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.” To review the entire fact sheet online go to <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.htm>. [Courtesy of Judy Meehan at the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition]

Spreading the APPPAH News

Past APPPAH co-president **Wendy McCord** is director of the new In The Womb Project for the [Gladys T. McGarey Medical Foundation](#). Writes Wendy, “Our group is working hard to get a new paradigm of compassion and knowledge out to the universe.” Their August launch announcement says, “We are made up of a group of women and men who have a deep appreciation and respect for mothers and babies. Each of us, in our own way has dedicated our lives to reawakening consciousness ‘in the womb’.” The focus of the In The Womb Project is to illuminate the vital and unrecognized first stage of human development—from one year before birth to the critical 24 hours after birth. (12/24) This requires a paradigm shift. When we understand and respect the importance of our origins we will be able to prevent and heal much of the pain of our humanity.” Dr. **McGarey** will be taking this document and others to a meeting with Dr. Wayne Jonas (MD on Obama’s White House Office of Health Reform staff) in September, to “further a more humane healthcare system.”

U.K. member [Patrick Houser](#) conducted a webinar in September for Lamaze International entitled *The Alchemy of Supporting Fathers During the Perinatal Time*. Attendance was the largest in Lamaze International’s webinar history, with 400 people gathered (online, in real time) from various fields related to pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding. Says Patrick of the amazing experience and enthusiastic reception of the cyber-event, “This is definitely a way forward.”

U.K. member **Tamara Donn**, together with her husband Peter, an EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) trainer, recently gave a 4-day training for birth professionals in the use of EFT to address issues of fear, loss, trauma, etc., in pregnancy, labor and postpartum. Writes Tamara, “It has been a huge success, and on the final day I paired each trainee with a pregnant woman or one who had suffered from birth trauma, to test out their EFT skills and it worked so well and gave the trainees a lot of confidence as well as really helping the pregnant women.” Future courses are planned for next year. Meanwhile, Tamara who lives and teaches in Kings-Langley—a

village near London—continues to train women from other towns and communities around England as facilitators of her [Birth Art Café](#) model of preparation and support for the journey into motherhood. Recognizing the need elsewhere, however, her intention is to “create a united group of wise, inspirational, non-judgmental, connected and supportive Birth Art Café mentors who will be able to take this work onward and upwards into the world, supporting more women nationally and eventually internationally into the initiation into motherhood and beyond, in an honest, accepting and loving way.” For more info., visit the [Birth Art Café](#) website.

In response/rebuttal to the controversial *AJOG* story reported last issue’s Media Watch (“[Home birth risks under scrutiny in controversial new study](#)”) member **Kalena Cook** contributed to an excellent collection of other perspectives published in (the unlikely?) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, online version. Cook (with co-author Margaret Christensen) wrote, “Women seek a holistic model of mind-body-spirit and if it’s not being met in hospitals, these consumers will seek it elsewhere. They live with their bodies, their babies and it’s their decision. Hospital LDR wards could improve their care with listening to their staff’s feedback and taking a cue from the hospitality industry. Critiquing home births, midwives and even those physicians who keep an open mind is like Custer’s last stand on the hill of the lucrative birth machine. But keep in mind even the critics wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for their great grandmothers birthing at home.” Read her comments in their entirety (post #4) along with others, at <http://chronicle.com/blogPost/The-Other-Birther-Controversy/26036/>.

MEDIA WATCH

This section of the APPPAH Newsletter is intended to draw attention to items in the news that are pertinent to prenatal and perinatal psychology. APPPAH does not necessarily agree with, or vouch for, the scientific worthiness of any of the news items mentioned here. Just reporting...

BREAKING NEWS: THE 1ST NINE MONTHS MAY SHAPE THE REST OF LIFE!



Forgive the editorial facetiousness; for most general readers the cover story of the Oct. 4 issue of *Time* magazine it may indeed be a major revelation to learn that in addition to genes, childhood experiences and adult lifestyle choices determining what we’re like, there’s “another powerful source of influence you may not have considered: your life as a fetus. The nutrition you received in the womb; the pollutants, drugs and infections you were exposed to during gestation; your mother’s health and state of mind while she was pregnant with you—all these factors shaped you as a baby and continue to affect you to this day.” Revolutionary stuff! “This is the provocative contention of a field known as fetal origins, whose pioneers assert that the nine months of gestation constitute the most consequential period of our lives, permanently influencing the wiring of the brain and the functioning of organs such as the heart, liver and

pancreas. In the literature on the subject, which has exploded over the past 10 years, you can find references to the fetal origins of cancer, cardiovascular disease, allergies, asthma, hypertension,

diabetes, obesity, mental illness. At the farthest edge of fetal-origins research, scientists are exploring the possibility that intrauterine conditions influence not only our physical health but also our intelligence, temperament, even our sanity.” So from my perch out here on the farthest edge, this editor feels encouraged that the *Times*, they are a-changin’.

[<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2020815,00.html?xid=rss-fullhealthsci-yahoo>]

CDC STUDY ON CONGENITAL HEART DEFECTS & NEONATAL MORTALITY

Last week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a [new study on neonatal deaths due to congenital heart defects](#), which are associated with preterm delivery and are the largest contributor to neonatal death attributed to birth defects. Among the findings: 4.2% of all deaths in the first 27 days of life were due to a congenital heart defect. Such deaths were 30% lower among preterm infants born to black mothers, compared to preterm infants born to white mothers. However, among term infants, those born to black mothers had 20% higher neonatal mortality attributable to congenital heart defects, compared to those born to whites. Why the racial differences by gestational age? The study’s authors say it’s unclear, and they call for additional study that looks at prenatal diagnosis, prevalence at birth of congenital heart defects and reporting of causes of death. [Courtesy of Judy Meehan at the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition]

MATERNAL PRENATAL ANXIETY AND STRESS PREDICT INFANT ILLNESSES

A study published in the August edition of *Pediatrics* examines the potential relationship between maternal prenatal anxiety and stress, and increased infant illnesses and antibiotic use during the first year of life. Maternal prenatal anxiety and stress has been linked to detrimental outcomes on the offspring’s development in both animal and human studies. The programming effects of prenatal stress on the physical health of offspring have also been shown in animal models, whereas they are confined to birth complications in human studies. In this study, both self-report and cortisol physiology were used to measure maternal prenatal anxiety and stress in 174 mothers with normal pregnancies and term deliveries. Throughout the infant’s first year of life, monthly maternal interviews were conducted to gather information on infant illnesses and the use of antibiotics. A marked increase in respiratory, skin, and general illnesses as well as an increased use of antibiotics was found in relation to prenatal anxiety and stress. The authors conclude that these initial findings warrant further examination.

SKIN-TO-SKIN “MIRACLE”: PREEMIE PRONOUNCED DEAD IS REVIVED

Kate and David Ogg were grief-stricken when doctors declared him dead following his premature birth at 27 weeks. The tiny body of their son was given to them so they could see him and say their goodbyes. Kate Ogg instinctively unwrapped her baby, Jamie, and also took off her hospital gown, so she was skin-to-skin with what she thought was a lifeless body of her son, who had not responded to 20 minutes of resuscitation efforts by doctors. (His twin sister had survived and was in an incubator.) She and her husband talked to Jamie, trying to make the most out of “those last precious moments” with their dead son: “We told him what his name was and that he had a sister. We told him the things we wanted to do with him throughout his life.” The “an extra minute or two” they were hoping to spend with their son extended to about two hours. During that time, they were startled when Jamie gasped for air and then began making movements. Although this continued, doctors dismissed it as “reflex actions.” Kate put some breast milk (which we in APPPAH know was the health elixir colostrum) on her finger, and Jamie eagerly took it. Repeated entreaties to the doctor to come witness this revival were

ignored, and the Oggs finally had to lie to the nurses: “Tell him that we’ve come to terms with the death, and to just explain it all to us,” is what brought the physician to their bedside. Examining Jamie with his stethoscope, he just shook his head and kept repeating, “I don’t believe it…” The story—which took place in Australia—has brought worldwide attention to the merits of “Kangaroo Care” and the efficacy of skin-to-skin contact for stabilizing at-risk newborns. One news account cites the Karolinska Institute finding that 90% of preemies regained normal body temperature by using the mother-as-incubator approach, compared with just 60% who did so in a traditional incubator. [Ed. comment: As so often happens, dealing with the “special needs” case may lead us to overlook that *all* newborns should be considered to have this “special need” of skin-to-skin contact with their mothers—along with their scent, heartbeat—and heart *field*—and that ideally *all* parents would seek to make the most out of those “*first* precious moments” with their newborn—an unparalleled investment in his or her lifelong well-being. How interesting it would be to follow these twins, to note any significant developmental differences, particularly in the psycho-social realm, between Jamie and his sister who went directly to the incubator for her first hours. Also interesting to compare differing coverage of the story, and the details that are deemed relevant or not, such as at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1306283/Miracle-premature-baby-declared-dead-doctors-revived-mothers-touch.html#ixzz0zzC6dqM7> and <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/38988444>.]

CANCER RISK IN YOUTH CONCEIVED BY IN VITRO FERTILIZATION

A study examining increased risk for cancer among children who were conceived by in vitro fertilization was published in the August edition of *Pediatrics*. The study followed 26,692 children born after IVF from 1982 to 2005, and compared the number of children who had cancer from this sample with children who were not conceived by IVF. Out of the 38 statistically expected cases of various cancers, 53 were identified in children who were born after IVF. The authors concluded a moderately increased risk for cancer in the children who were conceived by IVF. Other risk factors found to be associated with the development of cancer included preterm birth and neonatal asphyxia.

Giving Thanks

Like David Chamberlain eloquently noted about the APPPAH Journal, neither does this more humble publication come into being without lots of editorial support and many contributions from those whose names sometimes appear, but who often go uncredited. In the spirit of the Thanksgiving that will come to pass while this issue is current, I want to thank all of those who so graciously fall into both those categories. My particular gratitude to Vanessa Eldred for her invaluable, labor-intensive help with media items; William Emerson for his unflagging, devoted championship; and to APPPAH’s tireless heroine Maureen Wolfe for just everything. – *Ed.*