

The APPPAH Newsletter

News From the First Frontier: Conception To Birth

Official Bulletin of the Association for Prenatal & Perinatal Psychology & Health, Spring 2011

Int'l Congress Spotlight: "Echoes from the Womb"

The Congress Committee, headed by chairs Barbara Findeisen and Jeane Rhodes, has been busy planning an exciting time for you this fall in beautiful San Francisco. The theme of our 2011 Congress is "Echoes from the Womb: Applications for Lifelong Well-Being," with a central focus on those echoes—how they come to be, what their implications are, approaches to healing the echoes when they are detrimental or destructive, approaches to fostering echoes that resound with health and wholeness, and the keys they hold for the future of our field. We have an impressive line-up of speakers and special events planned for you. Keynote speakers include:

- Bruce Lipton, PhD (author of *Biology of Belief* and *Spontaneous Evolution*)
- Annie Murphy-Paul (author of *Origins: How the Nine Months Before Birth Shape the Rest of Our Lives*)
- Jeanne Ohm, DC (founder and executive editor of *Pathways to Family Wellness*)
- Gabor Maté, MD (author of *Scattered and In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*)
- Michael Trout (director of The Infant-Parent Institute and author of *The Jonathan Letters* and *Baby Verses*)
- Raylene Phillips, MD (neonatal intensive care physician)
- Marcy Axness, PhD (author of the upcoming *Parenting for Peace*)

The David Cheek Memorial Address will be delivered by Phyllis Klaus, co-author of the classic *Bonding* as well as *Your Amazing Newborn* and *The Doula Book*. You will have an opportunity to interact with most of the keynote speakers when they serve on panels following their talks.

There will be a total of sixteen concurrent sessions over four sessions, each one hour in length, each featuring exceptional presenters and topics. (We apologize in advance for the inevitable dilemmas you may face in choosing!) Keep an eye on the website: birthpsychology.com website for program details.

The Congress is being designed to get all attendees actively involved, with focus groups spotlighting such topics as creating optimal birth environments, regression therapy, generational impacts, technology and birth, media and politics, and international contributions.

This year we will gather in San Francisco at the beautiful Hotel Kabuki in Japantown, offering zen-like serenity surrounded by a vibrant international community of shopping, dining, and entertainment venues. Many of the conference rooms at Hotel Kabuki open to tranquil garden views—a perfect space to come together in networking, learning and sharing. They are offering APPPAH attendees a special room rate, which you can get by making your room reservations through the [APPPAH portal](#). The Congress opens on Thursday evening, November 17th and continues through Sunday, November 20th. And, there is also the opportunity to do an all-day pre-congress workshop on Thursday, so you may want to arrive on Wednesday evening to take full advantage of the opportunities. Watch the website for the list of workshop presenters for that day. **Register before June 15th for early rates.**



Let us meet and be inspired beneath Japantown's cherry trees in November!

Letter from the President

Dear APPPAH Members and Non-Members,

One of the particular blessings of spring is Mother's Day. Most countries including the U.S., Australia, Canada and India celebrate Mother's Day. In the U.S. this year, it falls on May 8, coincidentally the same day Mother's Day was signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson in 1914. Since then people across the world have been celebrating Mother's Day with joy and devotion. More than half of APPPAH's members are mothers, not only of their own children, but also in blended families as stepmothers, foster mothers, adoptive mothers, or as single mothers. On behalf of APPPAH, I honor and thank mothers everywhere for the gift of life and nurture that they provide. Without them we would not exist, nor would we thrive!



William Emerson

In honoring mothers, I want to name a challenge that they face during childbirth. Childbirth has been medicalized, resulting in its movement away from homes, midwives, and sacred birthing sites into hospitals that make liberal use of technology. This move was ostensibly done to provide women with the safest births possible, but it was not accomplished without hazards, nor does it appear to provide more safety. Ninety-nine percent of American mothers now give birth in hospitals, in case “anything goes wrong,” or for the sake of convenience—although as many as thirty percent of mothers would like to give birth in the safety and intimacy of their own homes, or in alternative birthing centers, but are too frightened by warnings from obstetrical medicine. It's a fear-based system, constantly reminding consumers that childbirth is dangerous and needs to have access to technology. Fear breeds tension, tension fosters compliance, and compliance inhibits natural birth. Michel Odent aptly observes that “prenatal care” has become “prenatal scare.”

Is the U.S. obstetric system providing more safety? Hardly. Obstetrician Marsden Wagner reports that we have a higher maternal mortality rate than twenty-eight other countries, that the rate has been increasing for over twenty years, and even worse, that over half of maternal deaths can be prevented. In addition, studies show that between 33 and 64 percent of mothers are traumatized by giving birth. The reason is clear to medical researchers and many midwives, but is not well known or readily accepted by the general public or obstetrical medicine. Women most likely to be traumatized by childbirth are those who prefer natural birth, meaning birth without drugs or surgery. Women least likely to be traumatized are those who prefer hospital birth, drugs, and surgery because they provide (apparent) safety, freedom from pain, and scheduling convenience for mothers and doctors. Although these particular women may not be traumatized, the same cannot be said for their babies. Obstetrical medicine should be encouraged and challenged to replicate the studies that have been done, to confirm the findings for themselves, and to practice technological restraint. In the meantime, discretion is warranted. References can be obtained from www.emersonbirthrx.com. Solutions will be discussed in a future letter.

I honor all mothers and wish the very best for women who give birth.

In your service,
William R. Emerson, PhD
APPPAH President

Letter from the Executive Director

[Ed note: Maureen Wolfe, APPPAH's extraordinary E.D., typically works tirelessly behind the scenes in countless capacities to keep the organization humming. With so much happening right now we are pleased to hear from her directly in this issue.]

Dear APPPAH Community,

We have a whirlwind of change taking place within APPPAH and I want to share some of the exciting developments, as well as one sad loss.

It is with much sadness for me personally, and for the APPPAH Board, that I report David Chamberlain has retired from the Board of Directors. In my role as Executive Director, David has been a personal mentor over the past fifteen years. His presence has given APPPAH the stability and credibility needed to venture into the academic world. David will still be an important advisor for APPPAH and he has given us a solid foundation upon which APPPAH can build.

Building on the foundation will include improving the look and feel of our website. Some of you may remember that we did our first upgrade about one year ago with the help from a team of creative and enthusiastic web designers at the Santa Rosa Junior College. This year, we have a new team from the college who will bring the website up to a whole new level. APPPAH's new site will have a new look and increased user-friendly features, including: ability for members to list their upcoming events and resources; RSS feeds to notify you when new postings are added; ability to purchase and download, individual articles or journals online (including an updated shopping cart); a media section where members may listen to keynote sessions from past conferences (and non-members will be able to purchase the sessions); a powerful search engine that will efficiently perform keyword searches; and new colors and navigational features. Expected launch date is June 1st (although, as with any due date, the site may come a week or two earlier or later!).

APPPAH's staff of volunteers, advisors, and board members includes some new faces. The Journal staff includes a new editor-in-chief, Jeane Rhodes, PhD. Jeane is a long-time member of APPPAH and, having served as associate editor for many years, brings experience and a fresh perspective to the Journal. Another new staff person on the Journal team is Patricia Lucas, who will be serving as our Book Review Editor. We also welcome two new board members: Sandy Morningstar and Pat Martin. Both long time members of APPPAH, Sandy is a therapist living in Vermont and Pat has organized APPPAH's onsite registration at many international congresses. Their insights and experience will be a welcomed addition to the board.

If you are interested in volunteering time for APPPAH, we would welcome you! Especially if you have graphic design, desktop publishing, or other organizational skills, please contact me at apppah@aol.com or 707.887.2838.

Hoping to seeing you at our 2011 Congresss,

Maureen Wolfe, CNM, MPA
APPPAH Executive Director



Maureen Wolfe

STOP PRESS: The website has been launched; please read update on back cover of this Newsletter!

David Chamberlain, A Tribute

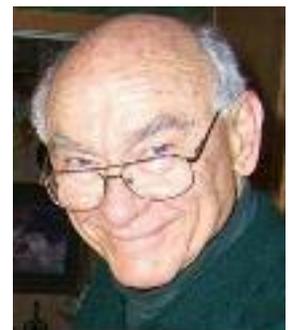
by Thomas Verny

Once upon a time, long, long ago, before people like you and I had computers, I was spending many hours in university libraries in hot pursuit of research that would bolster my theory, based on clinical case material I had assembled over the years, that it was possible to remember events going back to birth, perhaps even before birth. Imagine my surprise when I discovered David's breakthrough research on reliability of birth memory in my Sunday newspaper! It was a feature about his report to the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis in Minneapolis. I began corresponding with David in March 1981 and immediately felt I had met a kindred spirit. In January 1982, we had our first chance to meet face-to-face during a promo tour for *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child* when I was a guest on the Merv Griffin Show in Los Angeles. I had invited David and Donna to be in the audience, and after the show we went out for dinner and non-stop excited conversation.

While in L.A., we decided to propose a symposium, "Prenatal Psychology Comes of Age," for the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association and also for the next annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. When neither of these large bodies could accept our offer, I suggested to David that we plan a conference of our own. We quickly agreed that it would be held in Toronto in the summer of 1983. I would make the arrangements, advance the funds and send out the invitations to potential speakers. David had an excellent list of names and addresses of leading scientists, many of whom he knew personally. We combined his list and mine—and the 1st International Congress on Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology turned out to be a glorious, enthusiastic and deeply moving event, successful beyond our wildest imaginations. At the conclusion of the Congress, a general meeting was held in which David was elected Vice President and I was elected president of the newly formed PPPANA (Pre- and Perinatal Psychology Association of North America), which ten years later was officially changed to Association for Pre- and Perinatal Psychology and Health (APPPAH). After the Toronto Congress I begged, entreated and cajoled David until he agreed to chair the next Congress, which he did with great skill in San Diego in 1985. In 1991 David succeeded me as president and led APPPAH brilliantly for the next eight years.

In 1988, David launched his popular book *Babies Remember Birth*, which focused on the drama and importance of birth and contained the largest number of birth memories ever published. On its 10th anniversary, he produced a larger, third edition and renamed it *The Mind of Your Newborn Baby*. To date there have been fourteen translations. From 1980 to 2011 the complete Chamberlain bibliography has grown to include sixty-one publications. His lectures and workshops have reached audiences in twenty countries (most recently in Ukraine, Chile, Belgium and Mexico). David is Founding Editor of birthpsychology.com, APPPAH's gateway on the internet. And of course, he has served continuously on the Board of APPPAH until his retirement after the November 2010 Congress—twenty-seven years.

David was, and I am sure will continue to be, a tireless ambassador of this Association and a charming and persuasive spokesperson for the humanity of unborn children. On the Board he will be missed, both for the wonderful person that he is, as well as for his unique knowledge and understanding of the bylaws and history of APPPAH. I would like to close by quoting from an address David gave at the 1999 APPPAH Congress. It tells you more about David than I ever could: "I marvel at how the Association has influenced my own life and work. What I realize now is that while I was busy investing my time and talent in the activities of the Association, the Association was building its investment in me. Had there been no Association, I cannot conceive how I could have done all this work. The truth is, the Association is the mother that nourishes us all. She generates energy and momentum, provides the structures for professional stimulation, enlightenment and support for pioneers and enthusiasts like you."



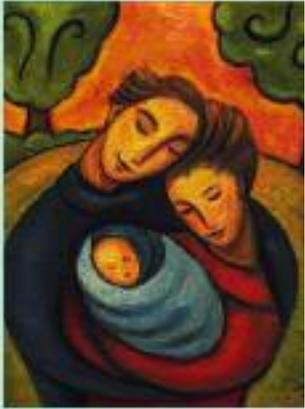
David Chamberlain, PhD

Register Before June 15th for Early Rates

APPPAH's 16th International Congress

Echoes from the Womb:
Applications for Lifelong Well-Being

November 17 - 21, 2011 - San Francisco, CA
www.birthpsychology.com - apppah@aol.com



Briefly Noted ~ Member Recommends

BabyBabyOhBaby ~ Bonding with your Brilliant and Beautiful Baby Through Infant Massage,
by David Stark. (DVD)

This gem is a triumph for all who participated in its making. Engaging words by Charlie Pearson warmly spoken by narrator Alyson Steel and clear images of real parents and real babies against an uncluttered background make this DVD by producer/film maker David Stark my favorite massage video of all time. It should be part of every baby shower registry.

Thoughtful, respectful and inclusive it shows parents interacting with their babies as they learn how to dance with and improvise on the clear instructions. The program guides parents to connect with their babies first and foremost before moving on to any massage techniques. Once parents give themselves permission to slow down, turn off phone and TV, ask their babies' permission to offer massage and establish contact with "still touch," then they move through the instructions and body areas covered. There is a demonstration of the contact and strokes body part by body part on a doll first while the list of logical but not mandatory strokes or stretches are legibly printed to one side.

I like the diversity of parent-child couples; the attention given to subtle cues from the babies as to whether or not they're ready for more stimulation or ready for "still touch" to help slow down and integrate what's already been offered; and the fact that moms and dads attend to their own comfort by sitting on low cushions while babies lie on soft towels on the floor so eye contact and safety are maximized. This DVD is most appropriate for newborn to pre-crawling stages, but once the massage strokes are mastered they'll last a life time. I wonder what the world would be like if all babies got the caring touch they (and we) thrive on and deserve.

This is a beautifully rendered instructional DVD for bonding with your baby through appropriate touch—the best I've seen of what's on the market. [For more information, including the inspiring back story, visit babybabyohbaby.com.]

—Melinda Maxwell-Smith, MT, RCST, SEP (Massage Therapist, Registered Cranio-Sacral Therapist, Somatic Experiencing Practitioner)



Resources of Note

SURGEON GENERAL CALLS FOR BREASTFEEDING

Early this year, US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin issued a “[Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding](#)” that outlines steps that can be taken to The Call to Action identifies ways that families, communities, employers and health care professionals can improve breastfeeding rates and remove obstacles faced by women who want to breastfeed their babies. These include community expansion and improvement of programs that provide mother-to-mother support and peer counseling; health care systems ensuring that maternity care practices provide education and counseling on breastfeeding; and employers working toward establishing paid maternity leave and high-quality lactation support programs. The webpage includes an excellent collection of breastfeeding resource links.

LABOR INDUCTION DATABASE

Childbirth Connection has launched a new area of their website to provide evidence-based information about the benefits, harms, and appropriate use of induction of labor—now used in approximately one-third of births in the U.S. According to Childbirth Connection, a systematic review of evidence published in 2009 found that many of the accepted medical indications for labor induction lack rigorous research demonstrating health benefits. Another review published late last year demonstrated harms of elective induction of labor (without medical indication). The new resource sums up the evidence from these reviews and other high quality studies to help childbearing women make informed choices. The resource can be accessed at <http://www.childbirthconnection.org/induction>. The site was launched as part of a partnership with the March of Dimes and the Leapfrog Group. The Leapfrog Group, an organization aimed at mobilizing large employers to improve health care quality, released [data from their national hospital survey](#) that shows many hospitals falling far short of targets to eliminate elective deliveries before 39 weeks. [Courtesy Premie Matters, from the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition]

COMMUNICATING WITH BABIES

We know that engaged, face-to-face communication fosters a baby’s social intelligence, and here’s a resource to help foster more of it. The U.K.’s National Literacy Trust published “[Your Baby is Amazing](#),” part of their Talk to Your Baby campaign, to emphasizing the importance of early communication in healthy brain development. It aims to help parents and caregivers understand how early communication manifests itself through simple mimicking and eye contact. It encourages parents to see that babbling is communication and that responding to it is a great way to have a conversation with a baby.

“BABY FIRST”

This resource from the National Association of Neonatal Nurses (NANN) is for parents and clinicians. It covers key subject areas for care providers, including thermoregulation, jaundice management, NICU designs, anesthesia, complementary practices, developmental care and vital signs monitoring. For parents, Baby First provides information around the NICU experience, a primer on prematurity, life after the NICU, a glossary of NICU terms, useful links and the opportunity to read and share parent stories and “baby heroes.” [Courtesy Premie Matters, from the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition]

CRITICAL CARE FOLLOWING TRAUMA OF CHILD’S NICU STAY

Among the least-known tragedies of prematurity are the estimated 76% of moms who experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after a baby’s neonatal ICU stay, with far-reaching consequences for families and communities. But a new nonprofit organization is addressing the unmet need for community-based peer support, which studies suggest can cut this statistic in half. [Hand to Hold](#), whose pilot program based in Austin, TX will serve

Resources of Note continued

as a national model, provides resources and support programs to parents of preemies, babies born with special healthcare needs and those who have experienced a loss. Founded by a mother of preemies, Hand to Hold focuses on empowering parents to advocate for their children; encouraging counseling when needed; providing resources and information for managing insurance and financial issues; educating parents about the challenges their babies may face and preparing them to meet those needs; and sharing the resources and support necessary to help all children enjoy a full and satisfying life. [Courtesy Premie Matters, from the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition]

MOTHERLODE OF INFANT MORTALITY INFORMATION

Filmmaker and longtime APPPAH member Debby Takikawa reports from her “Reducing Infant Mortality” project: “Over the last year our friend Annie Yakutis has been collecting articles about infant mortality and prematurity and organizing them into the archive. Here is a word from Annie: “According to Wikipedia infant mortality is defined as the number of infant deaths (one year of age or younger) per 1000 live births. Until I began compiling internet news articles and blogs for Debby I had no idea that both the UN and the CIA maintain data about the infant mortality rates of 224 countries around the world, nor did I know this data is the benchmark used to evaluate standards of living. That the United States ranks either 33rd out of 195 (UN) or 46th out of 224 (CIA) came as a surprise. If you are expecting a baby, your mere presence makes a difference—a recent study suggests that an infant’s survival rate is improved significantly when both parents are involved, both during pregnancy and beyond.” www.reducinginfantmortality.com/News_Resource.html

One-Day Workshops in San Francisco

The following workshops will be offered on Thursday, November 17th, 2011 9am - 4pm at the Kubaki Hotel in San Francisco. Plan to attend just the workshop or add it to your congress registration.

Register Now



Bruce Lipton

The Science of Personal and Global Transformation

Presentation reviews how our pre- and perinatal programming shapes our genetics, behavior and thoughts, elements that create the conditions of our body and our place in the world.



Robbie Davis-Floyd and Gregg LaHood: Birth Across Cultures: An Evolutionary Perspective

Dynamic combination of two speakers joining forces for the first time to discuss the evolution of human, cultural, and spiritual development.



Phyllis Klaus

Use of Hypnosis & Brief Psychotherapy to Alleviate Medical & Psychological Complications of Pregnancy

During the perinatal period of pregnancy, birth, and post partum many aspects of distress may manifest as physical or psychological symptoms. Using brief hypnotherapeutic methods can often alleviate symptoms.



Dennis Hertenstein

Immediate Postpartum Birth Trauma Interventions

Cranial-sacral tools suitable for application at births to decrease the need for medical intervention. [Workshop for professionals directly involved with birth only]

APPPAH Regional Meeting

Washington, DC - August 7 - 8, 2011

There will be a regional APPPAH meeting and fundraiser this August 7th and 8th at the Chevy Chase Marriott (near DC). This is the first APPPAH meeting of any kind on the east coast in a number of years. It will be an opportunity for APPPAH members, potential APPPAH members, those interested in APPPAH-oriented education/issues and for those working with babies and expectant mothers. It will also be a chance for those working with adults on issues related to prenatal, birth and early attachment psychology to meet for networking, resource sharing and education. We will work creatively and collaboratively to support each other in improving depth of knowledge and skill building in our field.

This meeting is for you if you are wanting to connect with other east coast folks interested in the PBA (prenatal, birth, attachment) psychology field. Those interested in learning about or discussing the public policy and health care economics issues related to our field should also attend. We hope to create a cadre of informed and interested folks close to the DC area as the health care delivery debate continues to unfold in the next few years.

In addition, we will explore the level of interest in encouraging APPPAH to consider conducting one of their large annual conferences on the east coast sometime in the next few years. If this is something of interest to you, please join us at the meeting.

On each day there will be presentations as well as the opportunity for attendees to share their knowledge and experience in our field. Presenters and discussion leaders will include William Emerson, Cherionna Menzam, Myrna Martin, Ellyne Skove, and David Paxson.

The first day features an educational and informational focus. We will review the issues and latest research and activity in the all of the areas of interest, including conception, the embryonic period, the fetal period, birth, post birth (lactation, circumcision, etc.) and the attachment issues that arise in the first eighteen months. This review will be a summary and a brief discussion of these subject areas. Those interested in further study in any area will be given a list of resources (books, websites, organizations), and will also be encouraged to attend the APPPAH annual meeting in San Francisco in November. There will be a resource table of printed material and tapes, and a small bookstore.

The second day will be more somatically oriented. For the morning segment, Ellyne Skove will present "Moving From the Inside Out: Connecting Heaven and Earth." This is a movement-oriented experience that explores the embodiment of issues from the primary period, and the physicality of developmental movement. The afternoon will focus on discussion and demonstration of the clinical therapeutic practices and techniques being used in the PBA field.

These meetings will be from 9 to 5 each day, and lunch will be included. There will also be informal social activities in the evenings. The cost is \$90 per day. For further information or to register, please contact David Paxson, DavePaxson@aol.com, 240-346-5155.

**If you are interested in hosting a workshop in your area, please contact the APPPAH office:
apppah@aol.com**

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. We mean merely to take note of what is going on, so that you may.

“AMERICAN WOMEN: BIRTHING BABIES AT HOME”

Time magazine ran an excellent, comprehensive article on the state of home birth in the U.S., including a discussion of the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*'s controversial meta-analysis from last summer. Author Catherine Elton leads with a clever yet chilling prologue: “When Hillary McLaughlin found out she was pregnant, she was unable to legally obtain the service she needed. So she looked for an underground contact. She got a woman’s name—just a first name—and a phone number from a friend who advised her to destroy the evidence as soon as she made the call. When McLaughlin reached the woman, however, the woman told her she no longer ‘did that’ and that she wasn’t willing to risk going to jail for it anymore. Turned off by all the ‘whisper, whisper, cloak-and-dagger stuff,’ McLaughlin decided to ‘jump state lines’ from Illinois to Missouri to find a legal provider. Forty years ago, you might have assumed McLaughlin was looking for an unlawful abortion. Rather, what the small-business owner, 33, sought was a certified midwife who could deliver her baby at home in Edwardsville, Ill.”

[Read more at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2011940-1,00.html#ixzz1HWwPvO9X>]

ROLE OF WOMEN’S CHOICE IN RISE OF C-SECTION RATES LIKELY SPURIOUS

A new analysis of data on nearly 20,000 women from around the globe suggests that the steadily rising Cesarean-section rates over three decades is not because “women are asking for them.” The rise in the rate of cesarean deliveries, particularly in middle- and high-income countries, is frequently attributed to women’s requests for the procedure. In the U.S. the C-section rate was 4.5 percent in 1965, and 32.9 percent in 2007, according to the CDC. But only sixteen percent of women included in the research review said they would prefer cesarean section to vaginal delivery. This is the first meta-analysis that’s looked at women’s preferences, and was published in *BJOG*. It searched the medical literature and identified 38 studies including 19,403 women from the Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa and Australia. [Reuters, Dec. 2010]

BED REST NOT SUPPORTED BY EVIDENCE

Bed rest may not be the best option for preventing preterm labor and may even cause harm to the mother and baby, according to an integrative literature review in a special issue on “Women’s Health Across the Lifespan” in *Biological Research for Nursing*. Bed rest or activity restriction, prescribed for up to one million women in the U.S. annually to treat pregnancy complications, is based on the assumptions that it is (a) effective in preventing preterm birth, and (b) safe for both the mother and fetus. According to the study, however, research over more than two decades has failed to support these assumptions. All known research about bed rest, high-risk pregnancy, and preterm labor was reviewed, and how those relate to the side-effects of bone loss, thrombosis, depression, stress, and other symptoms. In addition to the impact of an overall negative pregnancy experience for the mother, which has largely been ignored by medical professionals, the researcher found a number of troubling issues with bed rest, including such concerns as: loss of muscle function, muscle atrophy, sore muscles; bone loss; maternal weight loss and lower fetal weight; fatigue, sleep cycle changes, and boredom; depression during pregnancy and postpartum; and nasal congestion, reflux, indigestion, back and muscle aches. [ScienceDaily, Oct. 2010]

Media Watch continued

EFFECTS OF PREGNANCY LOSS PERSISTS MANY YEARS

A study of 13,000 British women found that the 2,800 who had suffered a miscarriage or stillbirth were much more likely to be anxious or depressed during their next pregnancy, and after the birth. This state of mind persisted for nearly three years after they gave birth to a healthy baby, researchers found. Jean Golding, one of the authors of the report, published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, said, “This study is important to the families of women who have lost a baby, since it is so often assumed that they get over the event quickly, yet as shown here, many do not.” Lead researcher Emma Robertson Blackmore, of Rochester University in the U.S., pointed out, “This finding is important because, when assessing if a women is at risk of antenatal or postnatal depression, previous pregnancy loss is usually not taken into account in the same way as other risk factors such as a family history of depression, stressful life events or a lack of social support.” [[The Telegraph, March 2011](#)]

CHILDHOOD ABUSE AND FEAR OF CHILDBIRTH

A Norwegian population-based, cross-sectional study of over 2,300 women examined the association between a self-reported history of childhood abuse and fear of childbirth. The study, reported in the journal *Birth*, indeed found that a history of childhood abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) significantly increased the risk of experiencing severe fear of childbirth among women giving birth for the first time (primiparas). For women giving birth for a subsequent time (multiparas), the fear of childbirth was most strongly associated with a negative birth experience. [[Birth, 37\(4\), Dec. 2010](#)]

BIRTH SIZE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Scientists have discovered the first evidence linking brain function variations between the left and right sides of the brain to size at birth and the relative weight of the placenta. The finding could shed new light on the causes of mental health problems in later life. The research, conducted at the University of Southampton and the Medical Research Council (MRC) Lifecourse Epidemiology Unit at Southampton General Hospital, reveals that children who were born small, with relatively large placentas, showed more activity on the right side of their brains than the left. It is this pattern of brain activity that has been linked with mood disorders such as depression. The study adds to a growing body of evidence showing that adverse environments experienced by fetuses during pregnancy (indicated by smaller birth size and larger placental size) can cause long-term changes in the function of the brain. “This is the first time we’ve been able to link growth before birth to brain activity many years later,” explains epidemiologist Alexander Jones, who led the study. “We hope this research can begin to shed new light on why certain people are more prone to diseases such as depression.” [[Stonehearth online newsletter, Feb. 2011](#)]

HINTS ABOUT THE FURTHER MYSTERIES OF THE FETAL BRAIN

New research finds that full-term babies are born with a key collection of networks fully formed in their brains. The findings, reported in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, challenges some previous theories about the brain’s activity and how the brain develops. Researchers using fMRI scans focused on “resting state” networks in the brains of 70 babies, born at between 29 and 43 weeks of development. Resting state networks are connected systems of neurons in the brain that are constantly active, even when a person is not focusing on a particular task, or during sleep. The researchers found that these networks were at an adult-equivalent level by the time the babies reached the normal time of birth. One network of particular interest identified in the babies is the “default mode” network, thought to be involved in introspection and daydreaming. Professor David Edwards, lead author of the study, said, “Some researchers have said that the default mode network is responsible for

Media Watch continued

introspection—retrieving autobiographical memories and envisioning the future, etc. The fact that we found it in newborn babies suggests that either being a fetus is a lot more fun than any of us can remember—lying there happily introspecting and thinking about the future—or that this theory is mistaken.” Indeed! [[Imperial College London news release, Nov. 2010](#)]

DEPRESSION IN NEW DADS

Postpartum depression affects new dads, too, and it can negatively affect parenting, according to a large observational study published in *Pediatrics*. The study of more than 1,700 fathers of one-year-olds found that depression occurred in 7% of those dads, and increased the odds of recent spankings nearly four-fold and more than halved the likelihood of the men reading with their child most days of the week. Pediatricians could be in a good position to help, suggest the study authors, as 77% of the depressed dads reported having talked to their child’s doctor in the prior year: “Pediatric providers should consider screening fathers for depression, discussing specific parenting behaviors (e.g., reading to children and appropriate discipline), and referring for treatment if appropriate,” the group recommended in their paper. [[MedPage Today, March 2011](#)]

IVF MAY NOT HAVE “DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS” ON CHILD’S INTELLIGENCE.

In the face of recently emerging research (much of it reported here in past issues) raising questions about the long-term health effects of IVF, a recent study of children’s test scores suggests that IVF conception “does not have any detrimental effects on a child’s intelligence or cognitive development.” According to an article in *Human Reproduction*, researchers studied “academic test scores of 423 Iowa children ages eight to 17 who were conceived by IVF and...the test scores of 372 matched peers from the same schools.” The IVF kids “scored higher than their peers in all grades on tests for reading, language, math, and vocabulary.” [[Los Angeles Times, Oct. 2010](#)]

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!

Contact Patricia Lucas ~ plucas.joppah@gmail.com

New APPPAH Web Site ~ Delivered on Time!

Sometimes in life there are moments when the only reasonable response is pure gratitude. This is one of those moments.

This past semester, Spring 2011, I have had the great pleasure of working with five talented people who were participating in a web-design program at the Santa Rosa Junior College here in Sonoma County, California. The team accepted the APPPAH website as their web-development project and, for a full 18 weeks, dedicated their time to rebuild our website.



*Santa Rosa Junior College,
Santa Rosa, California*



What a team of young people they turned out to be! Enthusiastic, tireless, creative, and above all, unendingly patient with my constant questions. The team included programmer Noah Freitas, designer Marisa Jacobs, content developers Jason Sanders and Miranda Limonczenko, project manager Caroline Quintanilla, and, not least, their esteemed teacher, Linda Hemenway.

Linda Hemenway

As with any major venture, whether it is giving birth to a baby, a dream, or a website, the telling of it never quite communicates all the effort that was involved — there are no words that can fully explain the complexity of the project — over 1,000 pages of information that required indexing and formatting is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg! The team faced each new challenge with creative optimism that was contagious. The final result is fabulous!

We are deeply grateful to the Santa Rosa Junior College, Linda Hemenway, and, most decidedly, the web design team ~ thank you one and all!

*—Maureen Wolfe, CNM, MPA
Executive Director, APPPAH*

Call for Papers

The *Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health* is accepting new papers for consideration. Your paper will go through a peer review process, and if accepted will appear in the print version of the Journal and also on APPPAH's website. Please consult a recent issue of the journal for manuscript guidelines, or contact our Journal Editor, Jeane Rhodes at jopppah.rhodes@gmail.com.