

The Center for Women's Health Studies and Promotion

Annual Report – 2013



End of Academic Year in Isha Be-Shela

אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev



THE BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV
CENTER FOR WOMEN'S
HEALTH STUDIES AND PROMOTION
ANNUAL REPORT 2013

1. **Name of the Center:** THE BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV
CENTER FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH STUDIES AND PROMOTION
2. **Center Directors:** Dr. Dorit Segal-Engelchin and Prof. Julie Cwikel, PhD, The
Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work
3. **Center Advisory Board**
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Prof. Gabriel Schreiber, MD, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences
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Dr. Rivka Berger, MD, Internal and Behavioral Medicine
Prof. Aya Biderman, MD, Family Medicine
Dr. David Geffen, MD, Oncology, Soroka University Medical Center
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Dr. Efrat Huss, Department of Social Work
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Dr. Noah Liel, MD, Cardiology, Department of Internal Medical
Dr. Sheryl Mendlinger, Northeastern University
Dr. Hagit Perez, Department of Epidemiology
Prof. Orly Sarid, Department of Social Work
Prof. Golan Shahar, Department of Behavioral Sciences
Prof. Ilana Shoham-Vardi, Department of Epidemiology
Ms. Sheila Warshawsky, MS, Faculty of Health Sciences

4. Center Steering Committee

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Prof. Julie Cwikel, Department of Social Work

Prof. Ilana Harman-Boehm, MD, Internal Medicine

Dr. Efrat Huss, Department of Social Work

Ms. Orly Liberman, Recanati School of Nursing

Dr. Hagit Perez, Department of Epidemiology

Prof. Orly Sarid, Department of Social Work

Dr. Dorit Segal–Engelchin, Department of Social Work

Prof. Ilana Shoham-Vardi, Department of Epidemiology

Ms. Sheila Warshawsky, MS, Faculty of Health Sciences

The Center Acknowledges its Generous Supporters

The work of the center strives to improve the lives of women, their children and families through focused programs. The supporters of the Center activities come from all over the world and help us maintain our vital programs that benefit the women of the Negev. This work is made possible through the generous support of many – our donors. We try to keep in touch with as many of you as possible and to learn of your interests and issues. We hope you find this annual report a way to open dialogue with us and to keep in contact. We thank you and we are joined by the many you have helped through your care and generosity.



Introducing the Center's new Director

Dr. Dorit Segal-Engelchin

Dr. Dorit Segal-Engelchin is a Senior Lecturer and the Deputy Chair of the Spitzer Department of Social Work at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She joined the Center for Women's Health Studies and Promotion in 2002 as a postdoctoral fellow, after completing her Ph.D. at Tel-Aviv University, and has served as the co-director of the Center for the past nine years.

One of her major research areas is diverse family structures, with particular focus on women's choices about family formation and child rearing and their impact on mother's well-being. One of the unique family configurations that she has been studying is the `hetero-gay family`, which has not been included or identified in previous research. Dr. Segal-Engelchin is currently working on the establishment of a Counseling Project for Diverse Family Configurations, designed to address the needs of all nontraditional family configurations in the Negev region and to promote research on new family configurations.

Her research in the area of women's health focuses on the factors associated with women's coping and health- promoting behaviors, including the intergenerational transmission of health behaviors from parents to daughters.



Dorit is the new director of the Center who will continue to work with Prof. Cwikel as co-director.

Mind-Body Approaches to Women's Health – the Work Continues

As we mentioned in last year's report, we believe that the cutting edge in research and practice lies in a better understanding of how the mind interacts with the body in order to affect health status. Based on our findings in research in the Center, we are now moving in the direction of developing applications from the research that is on-going here in order to prevent disease and promote psychological and physical health. These applications incorporate cognitive behavioral therapies, relaxation techniques, somatic-experiencing (SE), visualization and imagery, meditation, mindfulness, the use of specific art-based techniques and other psycho-educational approaches to prevent and treat a wide range of challenges to women's physical and mental health. This year we continued to train our mental health practitioners as well as develop new areas of research. We are pleased to provide this 2013 Annual Report to share some of the exciting developments and programs.

Developing new treatment techniques for women coping with infertility problems

Following the dissertation research of Dr. Jo Czamanski-Cohen, where we conducted a clinical trial to test the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral methods in reducing the stress associated with the diagnosis and treatment due to infertility, we have begun to develop treatment applications based on this research. Dr. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen's research on women undergoing in-vitro fertilization (IVF) has showed that women practicing cognitive behavioral interventions (CBI) were shown to have reduced stress, and when women practiced CBI at home they demonstrated improved pregnancy rates. Her ground-breaking results suggest that practicing relaxation techniques can assist women in normalizing their stress reactions. We established a working group led by Prof. Orly Sarid in which we are considering how our findings might be applied to women before they reach the stage of IVF (in-vitro fertilization), in order to reduce the distress, cost and time in treating infertility in couples. This working group is considering a range of treatment options ranging from interpersonal therapy to remote options using phone, SKYPE and I-phone as a mode of delivery of mind-body treatment techniques.

Mind-body techniques for cancer patients and their family members

We have been given a support grant from the Oncology Patients Memorial Fund to help to subsidize the treatments offered to cancer patients and their families who may have difficulties leaving the house and accessing psychosocial support services. In collaboration with Prof. David Geffen from the Oncology Unit at Soroka Hospital and Dr. Yoram Zinger from the Long-Term Care Unit from the Negev, we are in the process of organizing the option to provide psycho-education, relaxation techniques and cognitive behavioral therapy through the web-cam. The protocol calls for initial home visits to establish rapport and treatment alliance with additional meetings conducted over the webcam to reduce the need for travel. Naturally, the treatment will be tailored to the unique needs of each patient or family member.

Continued Training on Mindfulness Techniques in Treatment

We were very fortunate that Yael Schweitzer, LCSW, an Israeli psychotherapist living in Portland, Oregon, returned to Beer Sheva in October, 2013, to conduct an intensive training for 16 mental health practitioners on how to incorporate mindfulness techniques into practice with clients. Mindfulness is an integrative psychotherapy technique developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, Professor of Medicine emeritus, University of Massachusetts Medical School, that involves focused attention, a non-judgmental stance, breathing and relaxation techniques. Clinical trials on the use of mindfulness as a therapy technique have been conducted on a variety of medical and psychiatric disorders. The weekly mindfulness practice group led by Prof. Vered Slonim-Nevo and Miriam Gaber, MSW, continued to meet throughout the year. In addition, Prof. Julie Cwikel has incorporated these techniques in training social workers to work with clients in the health care system.



Participants in Yael Schweitzer's Workshop



Yael Schweitzer with Julie Cwikel

Combining Cognitive Behavioral Techniques with Art Therapy (CBI-ART)

Combining aspects of art with strategies of empirically tested cognitive behavior therapy techniques has led to a research and practice innovation at the Center which was generously supported by Aileen Whitman of Philadelphia. This treatment innovation evolved from the clinical and theoretical work numerous members of the Center. This year we expanded the use of this protocol with individual clients with a variety of diagnoses, such as anxiety, chronic pain, coping with cancer and infertility problems. Evaluations of the therapy sessions showed a significant reduction in self-reported distress. The protocol was taught to the psychotherapists working in Isha Be-Shela and many have adapted it for use in their practice. We completed work on an evaluation paper of the client data which we hope will be published soon. These data were presented at one local and one international conference by Dr. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen.

New Research Initiatives

The Health and Quality of Life Profile of Women in Diverse Family Configurations

Following her previous studies on single mothers by choice and mothers in hetero-gay families, Dr. Dorit Segal-Engelchin is now conducting a new study designed to assess the effects of diverse family configurations on women's health and quality of life. The study compares differences in quality of life and health outcomes between: married mothers, single mothers by choice, mothers in hetero-gay families, divorced mothers, partnered and un-partnered lesbian mothers.

Examining Treatment Preferences for Women Post-Partum, With and Without Post-Partum Depression

In collaboration with Ms. Saralee Glasser, an epidemiologist and Israel's leading expert on post-partum depression, from the Gertner Institute for Epidemiology and Health Policy Research and Dr. Racheli Magnezi, a health economist from Bar-Ilan University, we submitted a grant proposal to ascertain the treatment preferences of women after childbirth, including options for web-based treatment. We hope to evaluate the treatment options for women who had symptoms of depression, anxiety or who did not have symptoms at all following the birth of a child. This research proposal was favorably evaluated and we are now waiting to hear whether we received funding from the National Institute for Health Research. In the meantime, an MA student, Ms. Tali Rosenbach is evaluating these issues among women using internet forums.

Mothers strategies to strengthen their daughters' body image

In collaboration with Dr. Maya Maor, a recent graduate of Gender Studies here at BGU, we jointly analyzed four sets of qualitative data on mothers and daughters focusing on how mothers have developed strategies that help their daughters to resist prevalent media and cultural messages about women's body image. This paper is now submitted for publication and was presented at the European Health Psychology Conference in Bordeaux, France in July 2013. Work continues on these data with the collaboration of a new PhD student, Ms. Efrat Cohen-Noyman who is developing her thesis around the question of how mothers can help their daughters to develop a positive body image.

The Coping of Hospice Medical Professionals

In collaboration with Dr. Yoram Singer, head of the Negev Hospice Services, we have begun two research projects on the organization of care and the coping of hospice medical professionals to the challenges of working with terminally ill patients. The first involves interviews with Bedouin patients on how they view the service and their illness and is a collaboration effort between Dr. Yoram Singer, Naamah Razon, Maya Maor and Prof. Cwikel. The second involves how medical staff members negotiate the conduct of 'SHIVA' visits when a patient passes away.

Coping of mothers during times of security stress

At the beginning of the year, we initiated a survey of the coping strategies used by mothers of small children in times of acute security stress in comparison with the coping strategies used by mothers at other times. This study showed a dramatic decrease in the types and frequencies of use of formerly useful strategies for coping during security stress. This study was designed by Limor Niego and Prof. Julie Cwikel and was based on an earlier study published by Dr. Dorit Segal Engelchin and Prof. Julie Cwikel.

Ongoing Research

Art-Based Trauma Assessment for Women in the Army

We continue to collect data for assessing the sources of stress and resilience of students who served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). This study uses the arts-based trauma assessment (ABTA) procedure that was developed and published (Huss, Sarid, Cwikel, 2010). We hope this initiative will further our understanding on the impact of combat and service related experiences on how women return to normative roles in society. This study was funded by the Brandeis University's Hadassah-Brandeis Institute and is being jointly conducted by Dr. Ephrat Huss and Prof. Julie Cwikel together with two MA students, Ms. Agam Marom and Ms. Miri Kogan. A new student, Ms. Tali Shternberg, will be evaluating the ABTA tool among identified patients with PTSD in collaboration with the Psychiatric Hospital of Beer Sheva.

Using Web Cameras as Tools for Behavior Change

Following the successful completion of our trial on the use of the webcam as a way to prevent work-related musculo-skeletal disorders, we continue to consider the applications of the webcam for improving workers' health. Our PhD student, Eyal Levy, who is an ergonomist working at Intel, together with Dr. Meirav Taib-Maimon from BGU's Department of Information Systems Engineering, is preparing a research proposal on the use of the webcam as a tool to evaluate ergonomic aspects of workers' health, with the incorporation of new programming technologies which have been introduced in the workplace.

Alternative Family Structures

Dr. Dorit Segal-Engelchin, together with Prof. Pauline Erera of the University of Washington, continues to analyze the qualitative data from interviews with parents raising children in the hetero-gay family structure (a heterosexual mother who contracts with a gay father to raise their biological child together). This year a fourth article based on the qualitative data has been accepted for publication, focusing on the motivations of gay men for choosing to co-parent with heterosexual women and the characteristics that they were seeking in selecting the birth mothers. An additional paper is now in process.

Dr. Dorit Segal-Engelchin continues to teach an academic course on alternative families that she has recently developed for undergraduate social work students. The course includes a strong emphasis on women's family choices in contemporary society and on the challenges faced by women in diverse family structures.

Understanding Women's Traumatic Birth Experiences

Working together with a nurse-midwife researcher, Dr. Ofra Halperin, a lecturer at Emek Yezreel College's nursing faculty, we completed a study on how women view their birth experiences and how these experiences impact their post-partum adjustment. Women were assessed at two hospitals in the north of Israel in order to gauge how they assess the birth experience directly following birth and 6-8 weeks after delivery. One paper was presented at a conference in Berlin by Dr. Halperin and has now been accepted for publication. A second paper is in preparation.

Mothers and Daughters – Transmission of Women's Health Behaviors

This project is on-going from the rich set of qualitative and quantitative data which formed the basis of Dr. Sheryl Mendlinger's doctoral dissertation completed in 2009. Analysis of these findings continues by Prof. Cwikel, Dr. Segal-Engelchin, and current MA student Daya Perach, focusing on the evolution of health-promoting behaviors such as exercise, positive body image and nutrition. A paper was accepted this year demonstrating how education and exposure to parental smoking during childhood shapes the smoking behavior of women.

Fertility, Technology and Psychosocial Intervention

Problems of infertility are a major stressor in the lives of some women. This project combines biology and psychosocial intervention in order to increase fertility and decrease the need for invasive procedures such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF). Prof. Cwikel, Prof. Sarid and Dr. Iris Harvadi, a clinical biologist, are part of the BGU research team in collaboration with Prof. Eitan Lunenfeld, Director of Gynecology and Obstetrics at the Soroka University Medical Center. Ms. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen's thesis was approved and she has submitted three papers on this topic. In addition, findings from her study on how infertility affects couples and how they cope was presented at a local conference. Prof. Cwikel and Prof. Sarid continue to explore options for collaborating with Prof. Martin Kammener from the Imperial College of Medicine in London on treating women with post-partum depression through SKYPE.

Graduate Students Creating New Research in Women's Health

Two PhD students have completed their studies!!!

Dr. Svetlana Prokoshev from educational psychology graduated this May after completing her study on assessing cognitive deficits among breast cancer patients. One paper from her findings has been published and a second one is in process.

Dr. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen had her thesis approved. She was jointly supervised by Prof. Orly Sarid, Prof. Cwikel and Dr. Harvardi on the relationship between stress, DNA integrity, and the physiological effects of cognitive behavioral interventions in women undergoing IVF treatment. She is currently a post-doctoral research fellow at the Ziyama Arkin Parent and Infant Relations (PAIR) Institute at the School of Psychology of the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya focusing on studying the transition to parenthood.

Continuing Students

Tzipi Hornik-Lurie has completed three manuscripts for her PhD thesis on the topic of "Challenges to Israel's Primary Health Care System in the Treatment of Mental Health Problems among Those Seeking Care - Implications for Health Care Policy." One manuscript, "Use of unconventional medical practices by primary care patients - religious resources vs. complementary or alternative medicine services" has been published in *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*. A second manuscript "The influence of physicians' recommendations on primary care patients' reluctance toward mental health treatment" has been accepted for publication by *Psychiatric Services*. The third manuscript, "Does specializing in family medicine improve the detection and diagnosis of mental health problems?" is currently under review. Her research has been supported by a student grant from the Gertner Institute for Epidemiology and Health Policy Research.

Yael Damri is now collecting data for her thesis on the reflective capacity of parents and their school-aged children among families with attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) compared to families without ADHD. The study is based on the mentalization theories of Profs. Peter Fonagy and Ariete Slade, and she is being jointly supervised by Prof. Cwikel, Prof. Naama Atzaba-Poria and Dr. Shosh Arbel from Soroka Hospital's Child Psychiatry Unit.

Avigdor Kaner: Based on his initial findings on the experiences of new fathers during the first year postpartum, he has developed an innovative internet-based intervention for new fathers. His study is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of this internet intervention for new fathers. He is now in the process of recruiting fathers for the intervention groups. He is being supervised by Dr. Segal-Engelchin jointly with Prof. Cwikel.

Ms. Efrat Cohen-Noyman is developing a proposal that will study mothers and teenage daughters and their attitudes toward how mothers help or hinder their teenage daughters in the development of a positive body image. She is being supervised by Prof. Cwikel.

Ms. Shimrit Engelsman is working on a mixed method study to explore the birth experiences of ultra-orthodox women who are giving birth in a cultural milieu that encourages high fertility. She has completed 20 qualitative interviews as a first stage in her PhD work and now she is developing a quantitative interview schedule. She is being jointly supervised by Dr. Ephrat Huss and Prof. Cwikel.

Master's Students who Completed Theses

Amit Shapira: "The meaning of professional success in the life stories of Ethiopian women". She was supervised by Dr. Segal-Engelchin.

Continuing Research by Master's Students

Tali Nevo: "The meaning of using an anonymous sperm donor from the single mothers' perspective". She is being supervised by Dr. Segal-Engelchin.

Daya Perach-Yosef: "Mothers and daughters' health behaviors: An inter-generational perspective". She is being supervised by Dr. Segal-Engelchin jointly with Prof. Cwikel.

Developing new avenues for fund-raising with Marlene Katz

Marlene Katz, a health advocate from Melbourne, Australia, visited the Center in May and again in October. Marlene, a successful businesswoman with extensive experience in developing and promoting new ideas worked with the Center staff to generate new ideas for economic growth. Together we are developing strategies for fund raising for the Center including options of “crowd funding”; attracting funds for specific projects using social websites from persons connected on internet in different levels of support. Currently we are working on setting up the crowd funding website.



From Left to Right: Ms. Nirit Segal, Ms. Andy Ifergane, Ms. Jill Zimmermann, Prof. Julie Cwikel, Ms. Marlene Katz & Ms. Limor Niego

Community Activities

Promoting the health of mothers and infants

Following the presentation of our ideas for establishing a national program to address post-partum depression in the Knesset last year, Prof. Cwikel continued to present a proposal on including Mom to Mom in local and national programs. Prof. Cwikel, as a member of the National Advisory Board to the Minister of Health, introduced a referendum on the establishment of adequate services to meet the needs of women who are screened as positive for perinatal mood and anxiety (PMAD) disorders in perinatal care services nationally. She also presented at the JDC- JOINT Israel forum for developing programs for the ages of 0-3.

Prof. John Goldsmith Memorial Prize Winners

The tradition continues of granting an academic prize to students working in the areas of occupational medicine, epidemiology, and/or environmental science to honor the memory of Prof. John R. Goldsmith. This year two prizes were awarded. ***Maayan Yitshak-Sade*** was awarded the Goldsmith Memorial Prize for her work on: "Air Pollution and Cardiovascular Risk Factors, Morbidity and Mortality: Spatial and Temporal Associations." She is a PhD student in the Faculty of Health Sciences under the supervision of Prof. Victor Novack, the Head of Soroka Clinical Research Center.



Prize Winner Ms. Maayan Yitshak-Sade

John-Michael Davis was awarded the Goldsmith Memorial Prize in recognition of his work on: "The informal e-waste system of Israel-Palestine: Contexts, problems and ways forward." His work was supervised by Dr. Yaakov Garb, Blaustein Institute, Sde-Boker. Both of students will give an overview of their work at a departmental ceremony. A list of the winners from earlier years is shown below.



Prize Winner Mr. John-Michael Davis

Goldsmith Memorial Prize Recipients: 2005-2012

Name of Scholar, Year of Prize	Title of Research	Department, Degree
Riki Ochayon (2005)	"Exposure to Environmental Risk Factors Associated with Cancer Among Kibbutz Members From Ein Hashlosa in the Western Negev."	MPH
Ayala Kanfi (2006)	"Chronic Morbidity and Occupational Exposures Among Workers of the Nuclear Research Center in the Negev."	PhD, Department of Epidemiology
Ilana Meallem (2008)	"The Management of Solid Waste in Recognized and Unrecognized Bedouin Villages of the Negev: Social Context, Impacts, and Recommendations."	MA with Honors, Department of Man in the Desert
Dafna Granit Dgani (2009)	"Encouragement of Exploration Among Young People Studying in Environmental Studies Through the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI)."	PhD, Department of Education
Tsafnat Test (2009)	"The influence of Hearing Impairment on Sleep Quality Among Workers Exposed to Harmful Noise."	Medical Student
Michal Ruzal-Mendelevich (2010)	Particle Grouping, a New Method for Reducing Emission of Sub-Micron Particles From Diesel Engines."	PhD, Department of Environmental Engineering
Alina Vodonos (2011)	"Developing a Questionnaire for Assessing Exposure to Risk Factors for Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes: a Validation Study."	MPH
Naama Buzaglo (2011)	"Was the Military Operation 'Cast Lead' a Risk Factor for Preterm Deliveries?"	MA, Emergency Medicine
Sarit Oriel-Levy (2012)	"The Importance of Understanding the Neurobehavioral Deficit Caused by Early Exposure to Organophosphate Pesticide during Early Brain Development on Mice."	PhD Department of Psychology

Community Health Promotion Projects

Mom to Mom - Em le Em



Our mothers group

Mom to Mom is now a well-established program, providing support for new mothers and their infants in the Negev. We are now marking the eighth year of this special volunteer project modeled after the successful program that began in Boston, Massachusetts. The program also operates in Jerusalem under the direction of Dr. Marsha Kaitz, a developmental psychologist of Hebrew University. In this program veteran mothers receive volunteer training in order to provide one-on-one support to new mothers who feel that they do not have adequate confidence during the first year following childbirth. The program's volunteers provide much-needed support on a weekly basis through home visits. By supporting new mothers we help them foster healthy childhood development for the next generation.

To date, 28 groups of volunteers have been trained and have conducted close to 500 home visits to new mothers. Since the beginning of the project, we have matched volunteers with 368 new mothers. There are currently 25 active mother-volunteer pairs. We are considered the leader in this field in the Negev and are have been asked by local counsels around the Negev to advise them on setting up and training staff in order to set up similar projects. These include Arad, Rahat, Beer Sheva and Ofakim. This year, we continued to work with the same winning team: Limor Niego, MSW - clinical social worker, Ms. Mati Talmon - public health nurse, Ms. Nirit Segal - administrator and Prof. Cwikel and Dr. Segal-Engelchin – supervisors.

This year we also continued to run a weekly mothers group that combines group discussions with didactic lectures on issues of mothering an infant. Approximately 30 women developed their parenting skills and established supportive contacts with other mothers in this open group over the year. Special topics presented included: coping with immunizations in light of the polio scare, physiotherapy and child development, yoga for mothers and infants, nutrition, optimizing sleep for parents and children, handling difficult situations in parenting and relations with parents and in-laws. In addition, we have started teaching principles of reflective parenting as were implemented in the Positive Parenting Program described in more detail below.

Isha Be-Shela – Women's Counseling Project in the Negev



This marks the fifth year of our counseling program, Isha Be-Shela, the first counseling center for women in the Negev. Leadership in the project is provided by Ms. Andrea Ifergane, MSW, clinical director and by Vered Deichman, MSW, together with Prof. Ruth Siton (psychologist) and Prof. Julie Cwikel. The staff now includes 16 psychotherapists, including one male therapist, who come from varied backgrounds (psychology, social work, art therapy) and provide individual psychotherapy to women and men of all walks of life from throughout the Negev (Beer-Sheva, Arad, Sderot). Most of the therapists are graduates of BGU. Ms. Jill Zimmermann joined forces with Ms. Nirit Segal in order to provide administrative support. The staff met regularly over the course of the year for monthly training sessions and case presentations and also met for group supervision twice monthly. This year we were glad to welcome back Mrs. Israela Meyerstein, LCSW-C, LCMFT, a family therapist from Philadelphia, who gave a workshop on “Shuffling Family Systems in Family and Couple Treatment”.

Since the beginning of the project, we have seen over 300 women in psychotherapy treatment, more than half of them young women between the ages of 20-30. Many of our clients have faced significant financial problems and have benefitted from the subsidized psychotherapy we are able to provide with the support of our donors.

SEE FAR CBT Training for Mental Health Practitioners

Through Isha Be-Shela, we conducted a second training on SEE-FAR CBT which is a combination of somatic experiencing, fantastic reality and cognitive behavioral therapy. This training was given by Dr. Miki Doron over three weeks and some 15 advanced practitioners from around the Negev participated. We are now trying to set up a supervision group. Now most of our Isha Be-Shela practitioners have taken this training.

Somatic Experience Training for the Promotion of Mental Health

Following the training of some of our staff members in the techniques of Somatic Experiencing, educator Gina Ross conducted a training program over a week, during the end of June and beginning of July. Twenty five mental health professionals from around the Negev participated in this Level 1 training program. The treatment program is based on cutting-edge research on the brain and its reaction to traumatic experiences. Our staff members participated along with others to enhance their treatment skills in the area of dealing with physical and mental health-related trauma.



**From Left to Right: Prof. Ruth Siton, Prof. Julie Cwikel, Ms. Gina Ross,
Dr. Shragit Greenberg, Ms. Nirit Volk**

Positive Parenting Program

Thanks to the generous support of Judge Leon Kaplan the Center continues to expand opportunities for supporting new parents in the Negev. This year we benefitted from a grant from the Sol Leshin Foundation that granted us funds to encourage the research interaction between researchers from UCLA and BGU. This proposal was aimed at developing a collaborative research program between BGU and UCLA in order to implement, evaluate, and disseminate a reflective parenting intervention for high-risk and underserved families. The UCLA researchers were led by Drs. Blair Paley, Catherine Mogil, and Patricia Lester from UCLA, and Drs. John Grienenberger and Regina Pally from the Center for Reflective Parenting in Los Angeles. Both groups submitted research grants which were unfortunately not granted.

This summer, Prof. Naama Atzaba-Poria and Ms. Noa Gueron (a PhD student who is currently completing her thesis under the supervision of Dr. Atzaba-Poria) came to Los Angeles for five weeks this summer in order to complete Level 2 training in Reflective Parenting (RP), as supervised by Dr. John Grienenberger and Dr. Wendy Denham. As part of this training they ran two groups for parents of school aged children.



**Prof. Naama Atzaba-Poria and Ms. Noa Gueron with parents group participants in
Los-Angeles, August, 2013**

We continue to teach an MA seminar on positive parenting skills for master's students of social work (MSW). This year the format was changed to include elements from the RP training including such topics as child temperament, setting boundaries and dealing with child distress without losing parental perspective. This was jointly led by Prof. Cwikel and Ms. Noa Gueron, who received submitted her thesis in development psychology, supervised by Prof. Atzaba-Poriah. There are 16 students in the practicum and each student works with one set of parents, who are parents to a child between the ages of 6 months and 2 years. The students teach RP skills and provide guidelines and counseling.

The program includes a strong emphasis on the role of fathers in childhood development. In addition, different topics are presented throughout the year including: coping with post-partum depression, communication between couples, parenting to adopted children, milestones in child development, historical and cross-cultural approaches to parenting, understanding the importance of play and reading to children, and coping with problems in sleeping and feeding.

This year we completed the training on the Parental Developmental Interview (PDI) for 7 researchers and graduate students. The PDI was developed originally by Prof. Arieta Slade and has been used to focus on the reflective capacity of parents with regard to their children. The training was carried out by webcam connection between BGU and Los Angeles. The PDI has now been incorporated into both teaching practice and research by the group's participants.

During the course of this academic year, Prof. Julie Cwikel, Limor Niego and Noa Gueron collaborated with the Parenting School of the Beer Sheva Municipality, to implement a training program in which paraprofessional leaders of parenting groups were trained in a number of areas, including promoting reflective parenting, working with parents on handling security stress, sleep and eating problems with children, and self-care for parents. This program which concluded in January, trained 12 group leaders (the trainers who work with groups of parents) who are now spreading their skills in their work with parent groups. We are now negotiating with the Municipality for the training of a new group of leaders of parents groups.

In addition, both Prof. Cwikel and Prof. Atzaba Poria have been asked to join the steering committee of the newly established WIZO day-care crèche at Ben-Gurion University in order to develop new programs for working with parents



A selection of graduates of the training program



Noa Gueron teaching the training course

Biogas for Unrecognized Bedouin Villages – A Project of the Middle Eastern Research Consortium (MERC)

Forty percent of the Negev's Bedouin Arabs currently reside in unrecognized villages without formal means of waste disposal, instead relying upon biogas digesters that recycle organic material (human/animal waste) into renewable energy for lighting, cooking and heating. Introducing the biogas digester as a means for environmental and social change is the focus of a research group funded by the Middle East Research Consortium (MERC) that brings together diverse agencies and actors from across the Negev, including the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (Kibbutz Ketura), the Abu Basma Regional Council for Unrecognized Villages, the Negev branch of the Israel Society for the Protection of Nature (SPNI) and professors from BGU's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research.

The goal of the project is the development of a group training protocol to promote general knowledge on health, the environment, recycling waste materials, the biogas digester and its use among women who live in the sites where the digesters were built. During this year, we succeeded in overcoming some problems formerly encountered in the organization of women's community activities.

Two groups of women were organized in two of the test sites of the project – aimed at learning about the women’s community activity relating to environmental issues, based on the model suggested by project. A 3rd site of the project started a women's community environmental activity in cooperation with the project's team. At the first site, the family members have learned how to solve maintenance problems and are now supplying it with organic waste on a regular basis. The digester has produced compost and the family has planted approximately 100 olive trees in land enriched by their own compost.

A gas refrigerator had been installed in the family's kitchen and the family now has the benefit of a gas operated water heater. Apparently there is a lack of hot water during the winter, and the family had been heating bath water on a wood fire. Recently, women's community activity at the site has been started due to the initiative of the farm's owner. About 15 women from the neighboring families were grouped to attend a training course (consisting a series of meetings) on the subjects of recycling their families' organic wasted and reusing of the products obtained.



The women's group participants listen to a lecture about the recycling system



Demonstration of the biogas operated cooking equipment to the women's group participants

The lectures and demonstrations were given inside the kitchen and highlighted subjects such as health aspects of the cleaning and safe disposal of wastes, the value of cooking and heating gas for keeping the food safely in a cold refrigerator, as well as the technical aspects of operating the kitchen utilities.

We have begun working at Um Batim, a site that evolved from exposure to the two earlier biogas digesters and is an excellent example of "diffusion of innovation" that is occurring among the Bedouin townships of the Negev. Experience with the two initial sites led the team to design a more affordable system. In collaboration with the Israel Nature Preservation Society, we have succeeded in establishing an educational program on environment and health literacy which is currently conducted with a group of 15-20 women on a weekly basis.



Some of the participants in the women's environmental education group at the Um Batim site (some participants would not agree to be photographed).

The group leaders include a Bedouin woman health educator and an educational leader from INPS. The first wave of data on environmental issues and health has been collected for the mixed methods program evaluation.

We are very pleased to report that Ms. Wissam Sedawi has progressed to being accepted as a Ph.D. student under the supervision of Dr. Orit Ben-Zvi Assaraf with Prof. Julie Cwikel part of her committee. She is continuing to work on the issue of the environmental awareness of elementary school children in the area around Abu Kaf, where we will be building the bio-digester. She will be addressing issues of waste management, sense of place and awareness of environmental hazards in her research. Below are listed the papers and presentations that were based on her MA thesis work, under Dr. Orit Ben-Zvi Assaraf.

Professional and Community Activities of Center Researchers and Scholars (in Alphabetical Order by Last Name)

With great pride we share with you many of the professional and community activities of the Center's researchers and scholars during 2013.

Dr. Orit Ben-Zvi Assaraf

Publications

Sedawi, W., **Assaraf**, O. B. Z., & Cwikel, J. (Accepted). The Conceptualization of Health and Welfare among elementary school students within the Bedouin Arab community in the Negev. *Journal of Cultural Studies of Science Education*.

Assaraf, O. B. Z., Cwikel, J., Sedawi, W., & Goren, T. (2013). Place based education in the context of waste-related implications on health and welfare among Bedouin Arab communities in the Israeli Negev. *Environmental Health Risk VII*, 7, 199.

Conference

Assaraf, O. B. Z., O., Cwikel, J.G., Sedawi, W., & Goren, T. (2013). Place Based Education in the context of Waste-related Implications on Health and Welfare among Bedouin Arab Communities in the Israeli Negev. Presented in the 7th International Conference on the Impact of Environmental Factors on Health, Budapest, Hungary, 23-25 April, 2013.

Prof. Julie Cwikel

Publications

Czamanski-Cohen, J., Sarid, O., **Cwikel**, J., Lunenfeld, E., Douvdevani, A., Levitas, E., & Har-Vardi, I. (2013). Increased plasma Cell Free DNA is associated with low pregnancy rates among women undergoing IVF-ET. *Reproductive BioMedicine Online*. 26, 36–41.

Kuzari, D. Biderman, A., & **Cwikel**, J. (2013). Attitudes of Women with Breast Cancer Regarding the Doctor-Patient Relationship. *European Journal of Cancer Care*, DOI:10.1111/ecc.12063.

Segal-Engelchin, D., Friedmann, E., & **Cwikel**, J. (Accepted). The contribution of parent smoking history and socio-demographic factors to the smoking behavior of Israeli women: A structural equation model. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*.

Halperin, O. Sarid, O., & **Cwikel**, J. (Accepted). A comparison of Israeli Jewish and Arab women's birth perceptions. *Midwifery*.

Hornik-Lurie, T. **Cwikel**, J. Feinson, M. Lerner, Y., & Zilber, N. (2013). Use of unconventional medical practices by primary care patients - religious resources vs. complementary or alternative medicine services. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2013.08.010>

Hornik-Lurie, T. Lerner, Y. Zilber, N. Feinson M., & **Cwikel, J.** (Accepted). The influence of physicians' recommendations on primary care patients' reluctance toward mental health treatment. *Psychiatric Services*.

Czamanski-Cohen, J., Sarid, O., **Cwikel, J.**, Lunenfeld, E., & Har-Vardi, I. (Accepted). Cognitive behavioral interventions reduced perceived stress and increased pregnancy rates during IVF treatment. *Human Fertility*.

Book Chapter

Cwikel, J. (2013). Social Epidemiology. In W.C. Cockerham, R. Dingwall & S.R. Quah. (Eds.). *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior and Society*. London, Wiley-Blackwell.

Invited Lectures and Conferences

2013- Halperin, O. Sarid, O. & **Cwikel, J.** Traumatic birth experience – cross cultural views by Israel Jewish and Arab women. ISPOG conference, Berlin, Germany. May 23rd, 2013.

2013- Spiraling between qualitative and quantitative methods in women's health research. Qualitative Research Health Forum, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. June 13th, 2013.

2013- Maor, M. & **Cwikel, J.** Mother-daughter relationships, media messages, and the prevention of eating disorders. 27th Conference of the European Health Psychology Society, Bordeaux, France. July 19th, 2013.

2013- **Cwikel, J.** & Czamanski-Cohen, J. Marital communication and its impact on the woman undergoing IVF treatment. Elah Conference on Psychosocial factors in Fertility. Meir Hospital, Kfar-Saba, Israel. October 31st, 2013.

2013 – **Cwikel, J.** & Bar-Gil, E. Understanding sexual harassment in a community leisure setting. Workshop for members of the Light Opera Company of the Negev.

Grants

Oncology Memorial Fund grant for developing services using SKYPE to improve access to psychotherapy treatment of cancer patients and their families.

Dr. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen

Publications

Czamanski-Cohen, J., Sarid, O., Cwikel, J., Lunenfeld, E., Douvdevani, A., Levitas, E., & Har-Vardi, I. (2013). Increased plasma Cell Free DNA is associated with low pregnancy rates among women undergoing IVF-ET. *Reproductive BioMedicine Online*. 26, 36– 41.

Yulevitch, A., **Czamanski-Cohen**, J., Segal, D., Ben-Zion, IZ., & Kushnir, T. (Accepted). "The Vagina Dialogues"- association between genital self-image and women's communication about sexual dysfunction and dissatisfaction with physicians. *Journal of Sexual Medicine*.

Czamanski-Cohen, J., Sarid, O., Cwikel, J., Lunenfeld, E., & Har-Vardi, I. (Accepted). Cognitive behavioral interventions reduced perceived stress and increased pregnancy rates during IVF treatment. *Human Fertility*.

Presentations at Conferences

CB-ART- The use of a hybrid protocol based on cognitive behavioral and art based interventions, The Spitzer Social Work Departmental Conference, BGU, Neve-Shalom, Israel. May, 2013.

The effect of cognitive behavioral interventions on stress, pregnancy rates, CFD and cortisol among women undergoing in vitro fertilization, Annual Social Work Doctoral Student's conference, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel. May, 2013.

CB-ART- The use of a hybrid protocol based on cognitive behavioral and art based interventions, NYU Art Therapy Program Clinical Applications of Art Therapy Workshop Series, Barney Building, NYU, USA. September, 2013.

Communication and couples quality of relationship during IVF treatment, Israeli Fertility Society annual psychosocial chapter meeting, Meir Hospital, Kfar-Saba, Israel. October, 2013.

Dr. Leeat Granek

Publications

Granek, L., Rosenberg-Yunger., Dix, D., Klaassen, R., Sung, L., Cairney, J., & Klassen, A.F. (In Press). Caregiving, Single Parents and Cumulative Stresses When Caring for a Child With Cancer. *Child: Care, Health & Development*.

Granek, L., Barrera, M., Shaheed, J., Nicholas, D., Beaune, L., D'Agostino, N.M., Bouffet, E., & Antle, B. (In Press). Trajectory of Parental Hope when a Child has Difficult to Treat Cancer: A Prospective Qualitative Study. *Psycho-Oncology*.

Rosenberg-Yunger, Z., Klassen, A., Amin, L., **Granek**, L., D'Agostino, N., Boydell, K., Hodgson, D., Greenberg, M., Barr, R., & Nathan, P. (In Press). Barriers and Facilitators of Transition from Pediatric to Adult Long-term Follow-up Care in Childhood Cancer Survivors. *Journal of Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology*.

Fergus, K.D., McLeod, D., Carter, W., Warner, E., Gardner, S., **Granek**, L., & Cullen, K. (In Press). Development and pilot testing of an online intervention to support young couples' coping and adjustment to breast cancer. *European Journal of Cancer Care*.

Barrera, M., **Granek**, L., Shaheed, J., Nicholas, D., Beaune, L., D'Agostino, N.M., Bouffet, E., & Antle, B. (2013). The Tenacity and Tenuousness of Hope: Parental Experiences of Hope When Their Child Has a Poor Cancer Prognosis. *Cancer Nursing*, 36(5):408-16. doi: 10.1097/NCC.0b013e318291ba7d.

Granek, L., Krzyzanowska, M. K., Tozer, R., & Mazzotta, P. (2013). Oncologists' Strategies and Barriers to Effective Communication About the End of Life. *Journal of Oncology Practice*.

Granek, L., Nathan, P., Rosenberg-Yunger, D'Agastino, Amin, L., Barr, R., Greenberg, M., Hodgson, D., Boydell, K., & Klassen, A. (2013). Psychological factors impacting transition from pediatric to adult care by childhood cancer survivors. *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, 6, 3, 260-269, DOI: 10.1007/s11764-012-0223-0

Granek, L., Mazzotta, P., Tozer, R., & Krzyzanowska, M. (2013). Oncologists' Protocol and Coping Strategies in Dealing with Patient Loss. *Death Studies*, 37, 1, 937-952.

Granek, L. (2013). Disciplinary Wounds: Has Grief Become the Identified Patient for a Field Gone Awry? *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 18, 3.

Rosenberg-Yunger, Z.R., **Granek**, L., Sung, L., Klassen, R. Dix, D., Cairney, J., & Klassen, A. (2013). Single Parent Caregivers of Children with Cancer: Factors Assisting with Caregiving Strains. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, 30, 1 45-5.

Granek, L. (2013). Putting ourselves on the line: Intersubjectivity and Social Responsibility in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26, 2, 178-197.

Book Chapters

Granek, L. (In Press). The Medicalization of Grief and its Depictions in Mainstream North American Media. In J. Stillion & T. Attig. (Eds.). *Death Awareness: Foundations and Evolution of the Movement*. Springer Press.

Granek, L. (In Press). The Politics of Grief. In D. Harris & T. Bordere. (Eds.). *Social Justice and Diversity in Thanatology*. Baywood Press.

Granek, L. & Brown, N. (In Press). Can't Buy Me Love: The Corporatization of Universities and Teaching Psychology of Women in Higher Education. In T. P.Light, J. Nicholas & R. Bondy. (Eds.). *Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education: Critical Theory and Practice*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Granek, L. (2013). Case Studies: Using Grounded Theory to Research Oncologist's Grief. In D. Treadwill (Ed.), *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry*. Sage Press.

Granek, L. (In Press). Grief Entry. *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*. Springer Press.

Granek, L. (In Press). The Complications of Grief: The Battle to Define Modern Mourning. In E. Miller (Ed.), *Complicated Grief: A Critical Anthology*. NASW Press.

Conference Presentations

Granek, L. Disciplinary Wounds: Has Grief Become the Identified Patient for a Field Gone Awry? 2013 American Psychological Association Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii. July 31ST - August 4TH, 2013.

Granek, L. Documenting Ourselves: Reflexivity & Subjectivity in the Conduct of Qualitative Research. American Psychological Association Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii. July 31ST - August 4TH, 2013.

Granek, L. Oncologists' Grief Over Patient Loss. Poster Presented at the Loss Bereavement & Human Resilience in Israel: Facts, Insights and Implications Conference, Eilat, Israel. January 28TH- January 30th, 2013.

Granek, L. Qualitative Research in Action in the Health Care Context: Examples from the Field. Qualitative Methods in the Health Sciences. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. January 27th, 2013.

Invited Talks

Granek, L. Introduction to Psycho-Oncology and the Emotional Well Being of Oncologists. The Medical School for International Health, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. May, 2013.

Granek, L. The Grief of Oncologists. Oncology Grand Rounds, Columbia Medical School, Columbia University. New York City, United States. February, 2013.

Granek, L. The Grief of Oncologists and Palliative Care Teams. Oncology Grand Rounds, London Health Sciences, London, Ontario, Canada. February, 2013.

Awards

Award for Excellence in Research. Israeli Society for Psycho-Oncology, Israel Cancer Society. June, 2013.

Best Poster Award at the Loss Bereavement & Human Resilience in Israel: Facts, Insights and Implications Conference, Eilat, Israel. January 28th - January 30th, 2013.

New Investigator Research Award for the Women's Issues in Behavior Therapy Special Interest Group of Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies.

Tzipi Hornik-Lurie

Publications

Aharonson-Daniel, L., Schwartz, D., **Hornik-Lurie, T.**, & Halpern, P. (2013). Quality of Coding Diagnoses in Emergency Departments- Implications for detection of the public's health needs. *Israel Medical Association Journal*.

Hornik-Lurie, T., Cwikel, J., Feinson, M., Lerner, Y., & Zilber, N. (2013). Use of unconventional medical practices by primary care patients - religious resources vs. complementary or alternative medicine services. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2013.08.010>

Hornik-Lurie, T., Lerner, Y., Zilber, N., Feinson M., & Cwikel, J. (accepted). The influence of physicians' recommendations on primary care patients' reluctance toward mental health treatment. *Psychiatric Services*.

Dr. Michal Liebergall-Wischnitzer

Publications

Herman, R., **Liebergall - Wischnitzer**, M., & Rott, D. (2013). Correlation between participation in a cardiac rehabilitation program and quality of life of patients with coronary artery disease. *Rehabilitation Nursing*, 6, 1-6.

Kadmo, I., Goldi, Y., Bdolac, Y., Murshid, F., & **Liebergall - Wischnitzer**, M. (accepted). Knowledge, attitudes and practices of physicians and nurses regarding the link between IVF treatments and breast cancer. *European Journal Oncology Nursing*.

Invited Lectures

Integrative Pelvic Floor Conference, Kfar-Hamacabia, Ramat-Gan, Israel: Paula method and evidence based medicine.

Loyola University Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery Research Group, Chicago: Randomized Trial of Two Exercise Methods For Stress Urinary Incontinence in Women.

Presentations at Conferences

Congress on Women's Health. Scientific Poster Session: Pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT) study following birth in the delivery room-project evaluation. Washington DC, USA.

Research Grant

Sigma Theta Tau International, small grants, "Randomized Trial of the Paula Method (Circular Muscle Exercise versus Antimuscarine Drug for Urinary Incontinence Symptoms of Women with Multiple Sclerosis"- 5,000\$.

Contribution to the Community

- 1) Elderly women, Haddasah Women's Health project in the community, Jerusalem (Gilo Community center): Pelvic Floor Relaxation and Women's Health.
- 2) Workshop: Paula Method and Women's Health, Women's health day, Israeli Museum.

Peer Review Conference Proceedings

Geo Toursim 36nd Annual STTE Conference, Conference Proceedings: Understanding Motivation of Safari Tourist: Likert Scale vs Open Ended Questions, by Samuel Mendlinger, Asaentel Melita, Sheryl E. **Mendlinger** and Arvind Sing. P. 96 – 111.

Invited Lecture

TO DO OR NOT TO DO: How Knowledge Acquisition Influences Decision-Making in Early Stage Breast Cancer, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA.

Presentations at Conferences

Society for Menstrual Cycle Research (SMCR) “We compared ourselves - Who got their period first, second who wears a bra”: Body image at Menarche -Mother-daughter dyads across cultures. New York, USA. June, 2013.

Prof. Orly Sarid

Publications

Czamanski-Cohen, J., **Sarid**, O., Cwikel, J., Lunenfeld, E., Douvdevani , A., Levitas, E., & Har-Vardi, I. (2013). Increased plasma Cell Free DNA is associated with low pregnancy rates among women undergoing IVF-ET. *Reproductive BioMedicine Online*, 26, 36– 41.

Sarid, O., & Shraga, Y. (2013). Infants’ sleeping and feeding patterning: a cultural perspective of maternal practices. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 3 (6), 118-124.

Gorodzeisky, A., **Sarid**, O., Mirsky, J., & Slonim-Nevo, V. (In Press). Immigrant families: Mothers' and fathers' proficiency in a host-country language and psychological well-being of daughters and sons. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*.

Halperin, O., **Sarid** O., & Cwikel, J. (In press). A comparison of Israeli Jewish and Arab women's birth perceptions. *Midwifery*.

Seminars Presentation at universities

Burn out processes and stress reduction among social workers. Yeshiva University, NYC, USA. June 2013.

Dr. Dorit Segal-Engelchin

Publications

Segal-Engelchin, D., Friedmann, E., & Cwikel, J. (accepted). The contribution of parental smoking history and socio- demographic factors to the smoking behavior of Israeli women. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*.

Erera, P., & **Segal-Engelchin, D.** (accepted). Gay men choosing to co-parent with heterosexual women. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*.

Isralowitz, R., Reznik, A., **Segal-Engelchin, D.**, & Schneid, K. (2013). Substance use trends and treatment among Israeli school dropouts. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction (IJMA)*, 11, 424-430.

Presentations at Conferences

Segal-Engelchin, D., Erera, P., & Cwikel, J. Having It All? Unmarried Women Choosing Hetero-Gay Families. The 4th International Conference - Researching Families and Relationships, University of Edinburgh, Scotland. June, 2013.

Segal-Engelchin, D., & Erera, P. Gay men choosing hetero-gay families: Continuity and change in family life. The 11th ESA – European Sociological Association – conference, Turin, Italy. August, 2013.

Prof. Ilana Shoham-Vardi

Publications

Bentolila, Y., Ratzon, R., **Shoham-Vardi, I.**, Serjienko, R., Mazor, M., & Bashiri, A. (2013). Effect of interpregnancy interval on outcomes of pregnancy after recurrent pregnancy loss. *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, (0), 1-6.

Wainstock, T., Lerner-Geva, L., Glasser, S., **Shoham-Vardi, I.**, & Anteby, E. Y. (2013). Prenatal stress and risk of spontaneous abortion. *Psychosomatic medicine*, 75(3), 228-235.

Wainstock, T., Anteby, E., Glasser, S., **Shoham-Vardi, I.**, & Lerner-Geva, L. (2013). The association between prenatal maternal objective stress, perceived stress, preterm birth and low birthweight. *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, (0), 1-5.

Pariente, G., Sheiner, E., Kessous, R., Michael, S., & **Shoham-Vardi, I.** (2013). Association between delivery of a small-for-gestational-age neonate and long-term maternal cardiovascular morbidity. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 123(1), 68-71.

Kessous, R., **Shoham-Vardi, I.**, Pariente, G., Holcberg, G., & Sheiner, E. (2013). An association between preterm delivery and long-term maternal cardiovascular morbidity. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

Wainstock, T., Anteby, E., Glasser, S., Lerner-Geva, L., & **Shoham-Vardi, I.** (forthcoming). Exposure to life-threatening stressful situations and the risk of preterm birth and low birth weight. *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*.

Peres, H., Glazer, Y., Landau, D., Marks, K., Abokaf, H., Belmaker, I., Cohen, A., & **Shoham-Vardi, I.** (forthcoming). Understanding utilization of outpatient clinics for children with special health care needs in Southern Israel. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*.

Reports

Shoham-Vardi, I., Sheiner, E. (CO-PI), Landau, D. (Co-Investigator) & Ratzon, R. (study coordinator): Socio-demographic factors and health care services utilization patterns associated with antenatal corticosteroid treatment in pregnancies at high risk for preterm delivery. Final report submitted to the Israel National Institute for Health Policy and Health Services Research.

Presentations at Meetings

Kessous, R. MD, **Shoham-Vardi, I.** PhD, Pariente, G. MD, Holcberg, G. MD, PhD, & Sheiner, E. MD, PhD. Association Between preterm delivery and long term maternal cardiovascular morbidity . Presented as an oral presentation at the Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine: 33rd annual meeting, San-Francisco, USA. February 12TH - 16TH, 2013.

Kessous, R. MD, **Shoham-Vardi, I.** PhD, Pariente, G. MD, & Sheiner, E. MD, PhD. Association between gestational diabetes mellitus and long term maternal cardiovascular morbidity in a follow-up period of more than a decade. Presented at the Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine: 33rd annual meeting, San-Francisco, USA. February 12TH -16TH, 2013.

Pariente, G. MD, Kessous, R. MD, **Shoham-Vardi, I.** PhD, & Sheiner, E. MD, PhD. Association between patients delivering a small for gestational age neonate and long term maternal cardiovascular morbidity . Presented at the Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine: 33rd annual meeting, San-Francisco, USA. February 12TH -16TH, 2013.

Pariente, G. MD, Kessous, R. MD, **Shoham-Vardi, I.** PhD, & Sheiner, E. MD, PhD. Placental abruption as a marker for long term cardiovascular mortality: a follow up period of more than a decade. Presented at the Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine: 33rd annual meeting, San-Francisco, USA. February 12TH -16TH, 2013.

Kessous, R. MD, Pariente, G. MD, **Shoham-Vardi, I.** PhD, & Sheiner, E. MD, PhD. Anemia during pregnancy as a marker for long term maternal cardiovascular morbidity: a decade of follow up. Presented at the Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine: 33rd annual meeting, San-Francisco, USA. February 12TH -16TH, 2013.

Peres, H., Glazer, Y., Landau, D., Marx, K., Belmaker, I., Cohen, A., & **Shoham-Vardi, I.** Barriers to care of high risk Bedouin-Arab infants discharged from neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in southern Israel: one year follow-up. 6th International Conference on Birth Defects and Disabilities in the Developing World. Cebu, Philippines. November 10th, 2013.

Invited talks

Ilana **Shoham-Vardi**, Hagit Peres: Why Bedouin parents of high risk infants don't use available health services for their infants? Results from a mixed-methods study. Population Council. Nairobi, Kenya. July 30th, 2013

Ilana **Shoham-Vardi**: The contribution of congenital malformations and genetic disease to Infant mortality in the Bedouin population in southern Israel. The 1st conference on health promotion in the Arab population in Israel. December 18th, 2013.

Research Grants

2012-3: National Committee on the Reduction of Infant Mortality, Ministry of Health, with I. Belmaker: Intervention to reduce the rate of birth defects and infant mortality in the Bedouin population of the Negev.

2013-5: Israeli Science Foundation. With Nihaya Daoud. Contribution of different forms of social capital: Bonding, bridging, and linking in explaining intimate partner violence during pregnancy and after birth among Arab and Jewish women in Israel.

Synopsis of Research and activities - Main Achievements and Future Plans

In the academic year 2012-3 we continued our ongoing collaborative multi-faceted intervention on reduction of infant mortality and promoting maternal and child health in the Negev Bedouin population, with the Ministry of Health, Soroka University Medical Center, Clalit Health Services and a local Bedouin NGO (Ajeek).

Together with Ajeek we launched a website www.salam-tak.com (in Hebrew and Arabic) dedicated to health, with a specific focus on mothers and infants. Based on our report: Health of Negev Bedouin Children submitted to the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, several community projects had been funded by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation. The projects are run by Ajeek : Installation of solar panels in homes of children who live in unrecognized villages with health conditions requiring electricity; experimental model providing ambulance services to Bedouins in unrecognized villages; peer instructors working in the community with mothers and adolescents; and, an ongoing forum of Imams (Islamic religious leaders) and health care providers.

We continued our work in the field of maternal and child health focusing on long term associations of a variety of pregnancy complications and long term maternal health, with our colleagues from Soroka University Medical center.