

# The Center for Women's Health Studies and Promotion at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev



המרכז לחקר וקידום  
בריאות האשה

The BGU Center for Women's Health  
Studies and Promotion



*Community social work students organizing the First Maternal Mental Health Day Event, May 19, 2016  
from left to right: Inbal Fux, Anat Nachmany, Adi Reiss, Ofir Peri, Jonathan Ashkenazy, Shani Leibovitz,  
Hila Levin, Shira Shaham*

## Annual Report – 2016

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 2016

1. **Name of the Center:** THE BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV  
CENTER FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH STUDIES AND PROMOTION
  
2. **Center Directors:** Prof. 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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Ms. Sheila Warshawsky, MS, Faculty of Health Sciences

Dr. Yanna Shraga, Department of Social Work

#### 4. Center Steering Committee

Prof. Aya Biderman, MD, Family Medicine

Prof. Julie Cwikel, Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work

Prof. Ilana Harman-Boehm, MD, Internal Medicine

Dr. Efrat Huss, Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work

Ms. Orly Liberman, Recanati School of Nursing

Prof. Orly Sarid, Department of Social Work

Dr. Dorit Segal–Engelchin, Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work

Prof. Ilana Shoham-Vardi, Department of Epidemiology

Ms. Sheila Warshawsky, MS, Faculty of Health Sciences

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### ***The Center Gives Thanks to its Supporters***

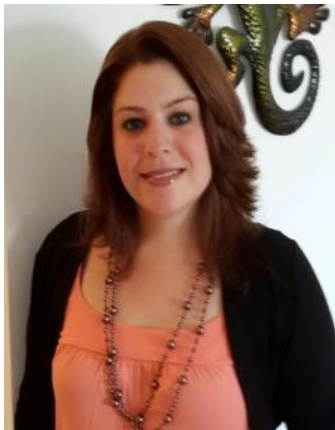
*Running a Center such as ours would not be possible without the vision, generosity and support of our supporters from around the world. They are the wind in our sails, allowing us to continue to be active on behalf of women, mothers and families throughout the Negev. This year marks the 16<sup>th</sup> year of activities in the Center and we know that this type of continuity would not be possible without you. We do not thank donors individually in this report but salute them for their commitment to "tikkun olam"; making the Negev and Israel a better place for all its citizens. If you are coming to Israel this year we would be proud to show you our work and meet you personally.*



## **Center Research and Community Activities**

We invite you to browse through our 2016 annual report, which describes the research and community activities of the Center, now in its seventeenth year. We continue to expand our research on women's health in directions that overlap with community medicine, psychology, social work and basic sciences. We use our research and programs to support parents and the family unit, which we feel is basic to the continued health and mental health of individuals. Please visit our website, [www.bgu.ac.il/womcen](http://www.bgu.ac.il/womcen), and the Facebook pages that promote more interaction with the larger community of scholars, women residents of the Negev and BGU university staff and students.

This year we have new staff in the Center. Ms. Kineret Grably joined the Center as administrator bringing new ideas and energies. She published three newsletters for our local Facebook page in Hebrew during this year. She gave birth to her first son, Lavi, in September and we wish her a hearty mazal tov. We were joined by Ms. Tina Ben Atar - Reshef, who is filling in for Kineret while she is on maternity leave.



*Kineret Grably*



*Tina Ben Atar - Reshef*

## Research Activities

### New Research: Chernobyl effects, 30 years later

The worst environmental disaster of the twentieth century occurred 30 years ago, when in the early morning hours of April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1986, the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl exploded, blowing off the 1000-ton concrete roof and dispersing radioactive particles all over Europe. This constituted the "largest short-term release from a single source of radioactive materials to the atmosphere ever recorded". In 1991, Quastel and colleagues conducted whole-body counts for radioactive cesium isotopes (<sup>137</sup>Cs) and physical exams on a sample of 723 adults and 300 children (aged 0 to 16 at the time of the accident). This study revealed that girls from high exposed areas showed significant increases in serum TSH (thyroid-stimulating hormone) when compared to girls from low exposed areas. No such effect was evident among the boys and there were no detectable thyroid nodules or increases in size of the thyroid gland.

In the 1990s, after conducting interviews with key informants, focus groups, and establishing contacts with immigrant NGOs, we managed to trace 111 of the original cohort, and together with snowball sampling, we constructed a sample of 404 from the contaminated regions and a comparison group of 304, closely matched on age and sex (N=708). We collected interview data on four groups: liquidators (n=30), immigrants from high exposed (n=121) and low exposed regions (n=253) and a comparison group from non-exposed regions (n=304). Unpublished data recently analyzed reveals that there was an exposure effect for: menstrual disorders among women, being unable to conceive after trying one year (women), which also was associated with measures of health worry for oneself and one's children.

Now 30+ years after this "natural experiment", we return to the issue of what are the reproductive and chronic health effects on women and men who have been exposed to low-levels of ionizing radiation from the Chernobyl. We plan to compare their reproductive health status using an index of reproductive health to a series of comparison groups: non-exposed immigrants from the FSU, immigrants from other countries (e.g. Ethiopia, North and South America, Western Europe, North African/Asia), and native born Israelis.

We are starting our research with the data set accumulated in Soroka University Hospital and have submitted a request to access the data to the committee for Helsinki approval.

Collaborating on this research initiative are: Prof. Michael Quastel (retired), Prof. Michael Friger, Prof. Eyal Sheiner, Dr. Gil Gutvirtz, Ruslan Seriengko (all of the Faculty of Health Sciences), Dr. June Hare and Dr. Danna Slusky.

In the meantime, we have collaborated with Dr. Danna Slusky, formerly from Beer Sheva and now living in San Francisco, and analyzed data from the 20-year follow-up of this same population that was her MPH thesis. This study was recently published in International Journal of Public Health.

### **Silenced voices: Women treated by irradiation for ringworm in the 1950s – historical, health and psycho-social perspectives**

To date, 7,728 women have been awarded compensation for partial or complete baldness resulting from irradiation for ringworm in childhood. Despite the large numbers of women suffering from baldness, this issue has yet to be researched. To fill this void, Prof. Segal-Engelchin and Prof. Shifra Shvartz, from the Faculty of Health Sciences, are conducting a pioneering study designed to present a multidimensional picture of the impact of hair loss resulting from irradiation for ringworm in childhood on women, including historical and psycho-social perspectives. The research, which combines qualitative and quantitative methods, will constitute a test case for similar cases of irreversible physical-aesthetic damage as a result of medical treatment. This damage is liable to have long-term psycho-social ramifications, which are not taken into account in treatment decisions.

This study received a grant from the ISF.

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

This research focuses on the treatment preferences of women after childbirth, including options for web-based treatment, treatment by telephone and through groups. Prof. Orly Sarid, Prof. Julie Cwikel and doctoral student Meital Simhi, together with health economist, Dr. Racheli Magnezi from Bar Ilan University, have been analyzing the data set on 1,000 post-partum women collected from the Rehovot region from the district Tipat Halav (Mother and Child Health Clinics) on their treatment preferences in the face of post-partum depression or anxiety. The data show that women are clear that they want treatment options available in the community, without having to resort to mental health services, due to the stigma attached to receiving psychiatric care. About 10% of the women in the study showed signs of PPD and this affected the type of treatment they preferred. This is a grant funded by the Gertner Institute for Epidemiology and Health Policy Research. We are now in the process of preparing two papers from these results.

## **Exploring the use of e-therapy techniques in social work**

Using both questionnaires and an on-line survey (using the Qualtric software), we conducted a survey of how social workers can use techniques using SKYPE to provide e-therapy. This research, conducted together with Dr. Tali Samson and Dr. Enav Friedmann, collected data on how social workers envision including SKYPE options and e-therapy in their work with diverse client populations. We are now in the process of writing an article based on these findings.

## **CB-ART (cognitive behavioral and art-based interventions strategies, collaborative work with Monash University in perinatal mental health**

This treatment style which combines between cognitive behavioral and art based therapy methods, has been the source of a number of publications with Dr. Ephrat Huss, Prof. Orly Sarid, Dr. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen & Prof. Julie Cwikel. We completed a second year of a project funded by the Pratt Foundation through a special BGU-Monash University grant initiative. Our colleagues from the Monash University, Prof. Jane Fisher and Dr. Heather Rowe of the Jeanne Haile Research Center are replicating our

protocol in Melbourne to reduce perinatal depression and anxiety. This year we tested their workbook-based protocol, called WAWA (Why Are We Anxious?) that works with new mothers around common anxieties that present during pregnancy and in the post-partum period. Meital Simhi carried out this intervention with 24 mothers and found it effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression in the post-partum period. We are now continuing to collect mothers to expand the sample size and this year are planning to conduct the intervention through the phone and over the internet. Meital presented these findings at The International Marcé Conference, September 26-28, Melbourne, Australia.



*Dr. Heather Rowe, Ms. Meital Simhi, Prof. Jane Fisher  
at Marcé Conference, Melbourne, Australia*

### **Art-Based Trauma Assessment for Women in the Army**

This year we joined forces with Dr. Ayelet Harel-Shalev from the Department of Conflict Resolution who has an interest in women in the armed services and Dr. Shir Daphna-Tekoa, who is a former Center colleague who helped to start Isha Be-Shela. A paper was published entitled: "Drawing (on) Women's Military Experiences and Narratives – Israeli Women Soldiers' Challenges in the Military".

We continue to analyze the data collected on sources of stress and resilience of students who served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). We hope this initiative will further our understanding of the impact of combat and non-combat army-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.



## **Tribute to Aileen Epstein Whitman, z"l,**

This past July, we lost one of our most caring and supportive benefactors, Aileen Epstein Whitman z'l from the Philadelphia area. Aileen was an early and enthusiastic supporter of women's health research in the Center. She was a beautiful and warm-hearted person who was a central figure in the Philadelphia chapter of AABGU. She always brought grace and gentle intelligence to any event that she attended.

She and her husband, Jules Whitman, z'l established the Whitman Family Prize in Excellence in Women's Health Research here at the Center that gave out small research grants to over 30 young professionals studying at BGU. Many of these have gone on to become leaders in women's health in all the related fields – medicine, psychology, nuclear engineering, social work, microbiology, to name a few of the interesting areas that were aided by her foresight and commitment.

Her memory is a blessing to all those who knew her.

She is survived by her two children: Barbara Epstein Sivan and Charles Epstein and her daughter-in-law Roslyn Epstein.

*Aileen Whitman on her visit to the Center in 2006. A luncheon in her honor highlighted the work of students who received Whitman Scholarships.*

*Nurit Barak z"l, Rinat Hachmon-Ram, Aileen Epstein Whitman z"l, Pazit Mattityahu, Galia Grosbard, Julie Cwikel (back row), Lora Warshawsky z"l, Sheila Warshawsky & Nirit Segal*



### **Tribute to Nurit Barak z''l**

Nurit passed away on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016. She was one of the founders of the Center. She wrote, together with Prof. Julie Cwikel, two monographs on the Health of Jewish and Bedouin women. She also helped to establish a center for rape victims and was an activist on behalf of women in the Negev. She worked for many years as a researcher and editor in the Faculty of Health Sciences. She is survived by her long-time partner, Prof. Zev Barak (Chemistry) and two daughters and a son. She is missed.



### **Tribute to Dr. Mona Sutnick z''l**

Dr. Mona Reidenberg Sutnick z''l, university professor and past vice president of AABGU's Philadelphia Chapter, passed away at the age of 79 on October 25, 2015.

Dr. Mona Sutnick z''l, and her husband Dr. Al Sutnick were dedicated supporters of the Center and were central figures in the Health Interest Group among the AABGU supporters of the Philadelphia region. Mona Sutnick was an early pioneer in investigating the relationship between nutrition and women's health and was unusual in possessing a PhD in nutrition.

The Sutnicks offered home hospitality to many BGU academics, during visits to Philadelphia. In June 2016, her husband Dr. Al Sutnick, accompanied by her two children, Amy and Gary, dedicated a garden in her memory near the medical school.



*From left to right: Gary Sutnick, Prof. Rivka Carmi, Dr. Alton Sutnick and Amy Sutnick-Plotch*

## Annual Student Prize in Memory of Prof. John Goldsmith

Prof. Goldsmith z'l was an internationally known expert in Environmental Health and Occupational Medicine who joined the Faculty of Health Sciences from Berkeley California in 1979. To honor his memory, his family and friends have established a fund to award a student prize to an outstanding student who has made a significant contribution through their original research in the fields in which Prof. Goldsmith was active: environmental health, occupational health, methods in epidemiology and biostatistics and methods for evaluating the impact of environmental pollutants. These topics often overlap with women's health issues and the promotion of women in the sciences.

This year's Goldsmith prize winner, Dr. Iftach Sagy, combines a career as a physician in Internal Medicine and a developing researcher in areas of environmental health. He has also studied gender differences in low back pain management. As both a resident and researcher in Soroka Clinical Research Center, Iftach managed to integrate the needs of the clinical field along with the unique environmental conditions of the Negev area. Being a physician who treats the local population, has allowed Iftach to recognize the unique environmental influences on the Negev patients that are frequently overlooked. He is involved in two studies of the environmental effects on health:

"The association of ambient temperature and the change of renal function among hospitalized elderly" and "The association of ambient temperature, Ramadan fast and emergency department visits with renal colic".



*From left to right: Prof. Julie Cwikel, Prof. Victor Novack, Prof. Dan Greenberg (his supervisors), Dr. Iftach Sagy*

**Goldsmith Memorial Prize Recipients: 2010-2016**

| <b>Name of Scholar,<br/>Year of Prize</b> | <b>Title of Research</b>  | <b>Department, Degree</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| Michal Ruzal-Mendelevich<br>(2010)        | "Particle Grouping, a New Method for Reducing Emission of Sub-Micron Particles From Diesel Engines."  | PhD,<br>Department of<br>Environmental Engineering  |
| Alina Vodonos<br>(2011)                   | "Developing a Questionnaire for Assessing Exposure to Risk Factors for Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes: a Validation Study."   | MPH   |
| Naama Buzaglo<br>(2011)                   | "Was the Military Operation 'Cast Lead' a Risk Factor for Preterm Deliveries?"  | MA,<br>Emergency Medicine   |
| Sarit Oriel-Levy<br>(2012)                | "The Importance of Understanding the Neurobehavioral Deficit Caused by Early Exposure to Organophosphate Pesticide during Early Brain Development on Mice."       | PhD<br>Department of Psychology   |
| John-Michael Davis<br>(2013)              | "The informal e-waste system of Israel-Palestine: Contexts, problems and ways forward."   | PhD<br>Department of Geography<br>Memorial University<br>MA, Environmental Studies<br>Ben-Gurion University |
| Maayan Yitshak-Sade<br>(2013)             | "Air pollution and Cardiovascular Risk Factors, Morbidity and Mortality: Spatial & Temporal Associations."  | PhD<br>Faculty of Health Sciences   |
| Helena Furman (Krasnov)<br>(2015)         | "Dynamics of particulate matter from desert dust: integration of retrospective & prospective analyses with linkage to human health in an arid urban environment". | PhD<br>Department of Geography<br>and Environmental<br>Development  |
| Zainab Heidar<br>Mahmoud Tayeh<br>(2015)  | "Mechanism of Action of <i>Asteriscus Graveolens</i> as an Anticancer Agent."   | MA<br>Department of Geography<br>& Environmental<br>Development, Sde Boker                                  |
| Dr. Iftach Sagy (2016)                    | "Effect of temperature on ER visits from kidney stones during the month of Ramadan"   | Resident in Internal Medicine<br>MD and PhD in Health<br>Systems Management.                                |

## **Graduate Students Creating New Research in Women's Health**

### **PhD Students**

**Talia Aizen**: "Establishing a relationship with a widower with young children: Women's perspectives". Supervised by Prof. Dorit Segal-Engelchin

**Efrat Cohen-Noyman**, PhD candidate finished collecting data on: "The effect of the mother-daughter relationship on the development of positive body image among girls in childhood and adolescence". She is supervised by Prof. Julie Cwikel. She is now in the process of writing her thesis.

**Yael Damri** submitted 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 is supervised by Prof. Cwikel, Prof. Naama Atzaba-Poria and Dr. Shosh Arbel from Soroka Medical Center's Child Psychiatry Unit.

**Nava Dihi-Tabu** (Jointly supervised by Prof. Dorit Segal-Engelchin and Prof. Jonathan Anson): "Endogamy and Homogamy: Jewish Marriage Market in Early 21<sup>st</sup> century"

**Shimrit Engelsman**, PhD candidate has finished collecting data on: "The birth experiences of Haredi Israeli women". She is supervised by Dr. Ephrat Huss and Prof. Julie Cwikel. She has prepared two papers from her research for publication.

**Liat Hofer**: (Jointly supervised by Prof. Dorit Segal-Engelchin with Prof. Shifra Shvarts): "Health and Psychosocial characteristics of Women Treated by Irradiation for Ringworm in the 1950's"

***Dr. Tzipi Hornik-Lurie*** who completed her thesis: "Challenges to Israel's Primary Health Care System in the Treatment of Mental Health Problems among those Seeking Care - Implications for Health Care Policy" has now joined Bar Ilan University in the department of health policy and management.

**Avigdor Kaner** has developed an innovative internet-based group intervention for new fathers, based on his initial findings on the experiences of new fathers during the first year postpartum. His study evaluates the effectiveness of this unique intervention for new fathers. Avigdor has now finished data collection and is now in the process of writing his thesis. Avigdor is being supervised by Dr. Dorit Segal-Engelchin and Prof. Julie Cwikel.

**Noa Kfir-Levin**: The rehabilitation community as experienced by both rehabilitants and therapists: The "Hiram" case. Supervised by Prof. Dorit Segal-Engelchin

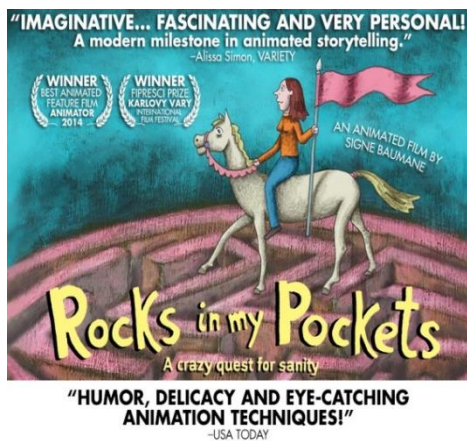
**Meital Simhi**: Meital is exploring the preferences and barriers to treatment for postpartum depression among Israeli women in a sample of 1000 women from Rehovot. This research is part of a grant that was given by the Israeli National Institute for Health Policy Research. She has finished her data collection and analysis and is now writing up her thesis. She is jointly supervised by Profs. Orly Sarid and Julie Cwikel

**Nuha Sliman**, The effect of family structure on children's morbidity in the first year of life in Arab society. Jointly supervised by Prof. Dorit Segal-Engelchin, Prof. Jonatan Anson and Prof. Julie Cwikel

**Nirit Volk**, PhD candidate. Her proposal was approved and she has now acquired the requisite approvals to collect data on "Empowerment of women who experienced child sexual abuse in their transition to motherhood". She is supervised by Prof. Julie Cwikel. This year she was a teaching assistant in the practicum course on Treatment of Women, together with Prof. Cwikel.

## Marking the First International Maternal Mental Health Day

The Center joined colleagues overseas and in Israel to mark the first international maternal mental health day on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, 2016. Together with 2<sup>nd</sup> year BSW students in the social work community-organizing course, we organized a day to promote awareness of the mental health issues that are of concern for new mothers. While Israel screens for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD, formerly called Post-partum depression, PPD) to date there is no integrated national program to address the effects of depression and anxiety on the functioning of new mothers. The position paper from the days' events was sent to Minister of Health, Rabbi Yaakov Litzman.



We showed the phenomenal full length animated film, "Rocks in her Pockets" by Signe Bauman, which discusses with great humour the transgenerational occurrence of depression among women, related to childbirth and relationships. Following the film, there was a panel discussion with the audience led by Prof. Julie Cwikel, Dr. Tzipi Frankel (psychiatrist) and Ms. Iris Raz (a midwife and psychotherapist) to discuss the film. The event was attended by over 35 professionals who regularly see women with PMAD in their work. The event was covered by several news articles in the daily papers.

At the event, we presented a position paper that was prepared for the Ministry of Health on the urgent need for a national program to train health care professionals and make care for PMAD less stigmatic and more accessible to women in Israel. The students facilitated the event and brought a community spin on the issues.



*From left to right: Prof. Julie Cwikel, Ms. Iris Raz and Dr. Tzipi Frankel*

## **Combining Motherhood and Graduate Studies – Workshops for BGU MA and PHD students**

This year we began a series of workshops that explored the issues combining an academic career and motherhood, both demanding and rewarding roles. The workshop, which included some 20 Phd and MA women students, explored how it is possible to juggle between motherhood, and academic demands, based on the "Good Enough Mother" theory of Winnicott. Practical ideas for developing careers within the framework of family demands were discussed together with dilemmas and challenges. Developing a personal identity that contains both career and motherhood and brings satisfaction in both roles was emphasized. This workshop was a collaboration between the Office for the Advancement of Women in Academia (Prof. Iris Shay) and our Center. The facilitators for this workshop were Ms. Limor Niego and Ms. Vered Deichmann. Two more workshops were planned for 2017, building on the very successful workshop from 2016.

## **Community Activities**

### **Mom to Mom**

Mom to Mom is now completing its 11<sup>th</sup> year, providing support for new mothers and their infants in Beer-Sheva and the Negev. "Mom to Mom" is a project designed to help mothers cope with the first year of parenting through home visits of volunteer mothers. The aim is to provide support and guidance to mothers of the Negev who feel that they lack adequate support to make the transition smoothly. "Mom to Mom" originated with Jewish Family and Children's Services of Boston and was brought to Israel by Dr. Marsha Kaitz, a developmental psychologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who runs such a project in the Jerusalem area and provided the initial training for BGU's staff. The security and economic situations of the Negev present unique challenges, complicated by the fact that more than 30% of the population are new immigrants – many of whom are cut off from traditional familial and social support networks.



Home visits are provided once a week up to one year post-partum by experienced mothers who are trained and supervised by Ms. Limor Niego (MSW), with the administrative support of Ms. Kineret Grably. Since its inception, the program has helped 511 new mothers and trained over 225 volunteer mothers. More than 95% of participants would recommend the program to a friend and 45% of volunteers have returned to mentor another new mother, some as many as five or six mothers over the years.

Evaluations have found Mom to Mom is very effective in preventing mental health distress among the birthing mothers and in developing a positive mother-infant bond for those in the project. Our evaluation has shown that it is very effective in preventing and treating perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, (what we used to call post-partum depression). A paper on the evaluation of the project was written this year and has been submitted for publication.

For the birthing mothers, the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with an experienced mother helps build their confidence and their problem-solving abilities. These networks have proven to be an invaluable resource during times of security stress, when leaving home is complicated by worry about safety. For the volunteer mothers, their investment in a mother struggling with challenges that they have experienced themselves offers them a way to make a meaningful contribution to another woman and to her infant, and thus to the larger community of women, children and families.

We also continued running our morning mothers' group, which enables mothers to meet once a week with their infants to hear a lecture, to network with each other and to receive attention to individual issues in mothering. This year we changed the format of the mother's group and are emphasizing the acquisition of positive parenting skills in addition to breastfeeding support, reading to babies and infants, healthy nutrition for moms and babies and coping with returning to work. Dr. Alison Perez joined us this year in running two groups for mothers with second and third children. Alison is a graduate of Em le Em (for three children) and a psychologist with advanced training in working with parents. This closed group including many of the same topics as were in the open mother's group. Throughout the past year, close to 40 mothers had benefited from participation in the mothers group by acquiring knowledge concerning mothering infants and establishing supportive contacts with other mothers. In 2016, we continued to expand our work around the Negev, and have added an additional group

of dedicated volunteers who are active in the area around Ofakim, some of whom are also associated with the Resiliency Center there.

We have expanded our work in Soroka hospital through the additional of three nurse midwives (one retired and two still working). We have been working closely with the social work staff of the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) and start to work with mothers with high-risk pregnancies even before the birth with the help of a retired nurse-midwife from the NICU. This special attention helps to secure a safe passage through the birth and into new motherhood.

A network of Mom to Mom coordinators was formed and a first conference was held in Hertzlia on November 8<sup>th</sup> (at the initiative of our colleagues in Hertzlia). Limor Niego attended the conference together with seven veteran volunteers and all found the day informative and great for networking on issues of programming.



*A meeting with moms and their babies*



*Mom to Mom volunteers meeting for Pesach*

## **Isha Be-Shela – Counselling Service for Women and Men in the Negev**

The Center's counselling service, which is the first counselling service in the Negev designed specifically to meet the needs of women and now men, has now been operating for eight years. During these years, this service has become a well-known and highly regarded mental health service in the Negev. This is reflected in both the growing number of clients who seek our counselling services and in the growing referrals from the professional community.

Since the beginning of the project, we have seen 533 women and 38 men in psychotherapy treatment, with the average age of 30. A majority of them are BGU students.

Our counselling service was led by Vered Deichman, MSW, psychotherapist, and teacher in the Spitzer Department of Social Work up until August of 2016. She worked together with Dr. Ruth Sitton, psychologist and Prof. Julie Cwikel. As of September 2016, two senior staff members took over from Vered; Ms. Noah Sitton (in charge of intakes and coordination with the staff, and Ms. Sarit Pinhassy (supervision). The staff now includes 15 psychotherapists, including three male therapists, all of whom are senior psychotherapists. We also are providing training for three students who are doing their field placement from the school of psychotherapy here in Beer Sheva. Our staff provides individual psychotherapy to women and men from all different sectors from throughout the Negev. Over the course of the year, we hosted lectures from leading psychological and psychiatric staff from around the Negev who gave outstanding lectures on different topics relating to therapeutic work with women.



*Marking transitions in the Center:  
Kineret Grably, Prof. Julie Cwikel,  
Limor Niego and Vered Deichman*

## **Publications and Academic Activities of Center Researchers and Scholars (Listed in Alphabetical Order by Last Name)**

With great pride we share with you the publications and academic activities of the Center's researchers and scholars during 2015.

### **Prof. Orit Ben-Zvi Assaraf**

Prof. Assaraf was on sabbatical this year at the University of Southampton. There she presented the continuation of work begun with Wisam Sedawi in her PhD studies which have to do with environmental learning among Bedouin communities in relation to the Hebron River.

**Ben-Zvi Assaraf, O.** (December, 2016) Southampton School of Education, "How Does Place-Based education Influence Sense of Place, and Nature Attachment among elementary school students in the Negev's Bedouin Arab community".

### **Prof. Julie Cwikel**

#### **Publications**

Sarid O, **Cwikel J**, Czamanski-Cohen J & Huss E. (2016). Treating women with perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD) with a hybrid cognitive behavioral and art therapy treatment (CB-ART). *Archives of Women's Mental Health*, 1-3

Czamanski-Cohen, J. Sarid, O. **Cwikel, J.** Levitas, E. Lunenfeld, E., & Har-Vardi, I. (2016). Practice makes perfect: The effect of cognitive behavioral interventions during IVF treatments on women's perceived stress, plasma cortisol and pregnancy rates. *Journal of Reproductive Health and Medicine*,

**Cwikel, J.** (2016). Development and Evaluation of the Adult Daughter-Mother Relationship Questionnaire (ADMRQ). *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*. Pp. 1-19, First online: Sept. 20, 2015

Shraga Y, Sarid O, **Cwikel J**, Reuveni H. (2016) (Accepted). Well child visits regarding growth and development of infants: A cross-cultural comparison. Harefuah.

Harel-Shalev, A., Huss, E., Daphna-Tekoah, S. & **Cwikel, J.** (2016). Drawing (on) Women's Military Experiences and Narratives – Israeli Women Soldiers' Challenges in the Military. Gender, Place and Culture. (accepted).

Slusky, D. A. , **Cwikel, J.** Quastel, M.R. (2017). Chronic diseases and mortality among immigrants to Israel from areas contaminated by the Chernobyl disaster: a follow-up study. International Journal of Public Health. DOI 10.1007/s00038-017-0941-1

## **Submitted**

**Cwikel, J.** Segal-Engelchin, D. & Niego, L. Addressing the needs of new mothers in a multi-cultural setting: An evaluation of home visiting for new mothers - Mom to Mom (Negev).

Prins - Engelsman, S. **Cwikel, J.** & Huss, E. Unique aspects of pregnancy and childbirth experiences among Ultra-Orthodox women in Israel.

## **Research Grants**

2014-2016 Preferences and barriers to treatment for post-partum depression among Israeli women. Joint project with Prof. Orly Sarid, Israeli National Institute for Health Policy Research. 2 years.

2014-2017 Expanding treatment options for new mothers with anxiety and depressive disorders, a joint BGU-Monash research program. Co-investigators: Prof. Orly Sarid, Dr. Ephrat Huss, Prof. Jane Fisher and Dr. Heather Rowe, 3 years.

## **Conferences**

2016 Sarid O Shraga Y, **Cwikel, K.**, Pereg A, Reuveni H. The effect of ethno-culture and health beliefs on mothers' vaccination behavior. 6th European Conference for Social Work Research. 30 March - 1 April, Lisbon, Portugal.

2015 Member of Scientific Committee, organized panel on Women's Health and Environmental Factors, ISEE, Rome Aug 30 – Sept. 3, 2016.

2016, Simhi M, **Cwikel J.**, Sarid O, Rowe H, Fisher J. WAWA – "What Am I Worried About": Adapting an Australian intervention for new mothers residing in the community with symptoms of anxiety and depression. The International Marcé Conference, September 26-28, Melbourne, Australia.

## **Dr. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen**

### **Publications**

Marroquín, B., **Czamanski-Cohen, J.**, Weihs, K. & Stanton, A. (2016). Loneliness moderates effects of emotional expression and processing on depression and physical symptoms in women with breast cancer: Evidence from implicit and explicit measures. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 39, 832-844.

Sarid, O., Cwikel, J., **Czamanski-Cohen, J.** & Huss, E. (2016) Treating women with perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD) with a hybrid cognitive behavioural and art therapy (CBART). *Archives of women's mental health*. DOI: 10.1007/s00737-016-0668-7

**Czamanski-Cohen, J.** & Weihs, K. L. (2016) The Bodymind Model: A platform for the conduct of the mechanistic study of art therapy. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*. 51, 63-71.

**Czamanski-Cohen, J., Sarid, O., Cwikel, J., Levitas, E., Lunenfeld, E., & Har-Vardi, I.** (in press) Practice makes perfect: The effect of cognitive behavioral interventions during IVF treatments on women's perceived stress, plasma cortisol and pregnancy rates. *Journal of Reproductive Health and Medicine*  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrh.2016.09.001>

### **Ms. Tzipi Hornik-Lurie**

#### **Publications**

Feinson, M.C. and **Hornik-Lurie, T.** (2016) Body Dissatisfaction and the Relevance of Religiosity: A Focus on ultra-Orthodox Jews in a Community Study of Adult Women. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 44(1):87-97

Feinson M.C. and **Hornik-Lurie T.** (2016) Binge eating & childhood emotional abuse: A mediating role for anger, *Appetite*, 105: doi: 487-493

Feinson, M.C. and **Hornik-Lurie, T.** (2016). 'Not good enough:' Exploring self-criticism's role as a mediator between childhood emotional abuse & adult binge eating. *Eating Behaviors*, 23:1-6

**Hornik-Lurie, T.** Cwikel, J. Zilber, N. Feinson, M. Biderman, A. and Lerner, Y. (2016) Does specializing in family medicine improve the detection and diagnosis of mental health problems? *Israel Journal of Psychiatry and related sciences* 53(1):63-70; IF=0,789; SJR= Q3 – 0,378

Katz, G. Kunyovsky, Y. **Hornik-Lurie, T.** Raskin, S. and Abramowitz, M.Z. Cannabis and alcohol use among first psychotic episode inpatients. *Israel Journal of Psychiatry and related sciences* (pending publication 17 pages);

### **Dr. Ephrat Huss**

#### **Publications**

**Huss E.** (2016) Belly dancing in Israel as enhancing quality of life: *Dance and the Quality of Life* (Dordrecht: Springer (accepted).

**Huss E.** 2016. Toward a social critical, analytical prism in art therapy The example of marginalized Bedouin women's images *Arts in psychotherapy* available online: 7-JUN-2016 DOI information: 10.1016/j.aip.2016.05.017

**Huss E.** 2016. PsycCRITIQUES Book Review for the book: *Art 1) Art therapy theories: A critical introduction* ( in press)

**Huss E.** 2016. Creative use of visual arts within conflict resolution. *The International Journal of Creativity and Problem Solving* Vol 26 no1 p 51-69.

Harel-Shalev, A., **Huss**, E., Daphna-Tekoah, S. & Cwikel, J. 2017. Drawing (on) Women's Military Experiences and Narratives Israeli Women Soldiers' Challenges in the Military. Accepted for publication in *Gender, Place and Culture*.

Segal-Engelchin, D., Kaufman, R., Amos O., & **Huss** E. 2016. Impacts of an intensive macro-oriented social work program on first year students' values, practice preferences, and sense of practice competence *British Journal of Social Work* Accepted.

**Huss**, E., Arts as a methodology for connecting between micro and macro knowledge in social work. Accepted to *British Journal of Social Work* (accepted 1.12.2016).

**Huss**, E., Art Therapy in International Aid. How critical theories can help. *Inscape* (Accepted)

### **Conferences**

2016 Plenary lecture: The role of Theory in Art therapy. Israeli Art Therapy conference

June 24th and 25th, 2016- International conference on art therapy, Prague. Plenary speaker: Towards a social prism for art therapy.

2016- The Art of Mentalizing Conference, New York Pratt Institute. Plenary Panel: Using art to mentalize the connection between micro and macro levels of experience.

### **Grants**

2015-2017 - Israel Science Foundation Grant. Is Salutogenics a universal concept? With O Braun (Co-PI)

2016-2018 – Prime Minister's Office. "Pass it on". Joint civic action as a way to create and enhance collaborations between Bedouin and Jewish youth in Israel. With O. Braun, O. Levison, S. Abu-Kaf, (co-PIs).

## **Dr. Michal Liebergall-Wischnitzer**

### **Publications**

**Liebergall-Wischnitzer**, M., Buyum, M., DeKeyser Ganz, (2016). Health promoting lifestyle among Israeli adult survivors of Childhood Cancer. *Journal of pediatric oncology nursing*, 33 (2),146-154. (Impact factor :1.006, Nursing rank: 59/114)

**Liebergall-Wischnitzer**, M., Shik-Nave, L, Glazer, Y., Kopitman, A., Nava Braverman. (2016). Pelvic Floor Muscle Training for Midwives and Nurses: Knowledge Transfer Study. Accepted for publication, *MIDIRS Midwifery Digest journal*

**Liebergall-Wischnitzer**, M, Braverman, N., Sveiky D., Noble, A. (2016). Obstetric Anal Sphincter Injuries and the Role of the Midwife. Accepted for publication, *The Practicing Midwife Journal*.

## **Invited lectures**

2016 Midwifery Evidence based practice 2016: different interventions during birth and delivery and their connection to pelvic floor damage. Rambam delivery room midwifery staff, Haifa.

2016 Controversy in labor: Pushing in the second stage of labor. Meeting of the Israeli society of maternal- fetus medicine and the Israeli midwives association. Tel Hashomer, Ramat Gan, Israel.

2016 Third and fourth degree tears and evidence based practice, 2016. Israeli midwives organization, Second stage of labour, Hadassah Ein Kerem, Jerusalem, Israel.

## **Conferences**

2016 Israeli Nursing Research Conference, Jerusalem. **Liebergall-Wischnitzer**, M., Shik-Nave,IL, Noble, A., Kopitman, A., Glazer, Y,& Braverman,N. Pelvic Floor Muscle Training (PFMT) for Midwives and Nurses: Knowledge Transfer Study.

2016 Israeli Nursing Research Conference, Jerusalem Halperin Ofra (presented), Noble Anita, **Liebergall-Wischnitzer**, M. Is there an association between striae gravidarum and 3rd & 4th degree perineal tears. ePoster.

## **Ms. Sheryl Mendlinger, Northeastern University**

Blog Post – Society for Menstrual Cycle Research (SMCR)

September 16, 2015 - A poignant first period story from the book schlopping  
<http://www.menstruationresearch.org/2015/09/16/a-poignant-first-period-story/>

Blog Post – Society for Menstrual Cycle Research (SMCR)

September 21, 2015 - How do mothers pass on knowledge about menstruation to their daughters?

<http://www.menstruationresearch.org/2015/09/21/how-do-mothers-pass-on-knowledge-about-menstruation-to-their-daughters/>

Blog Post – Society for Menstrual Cycle Research (SMCR)

April 14, 2016 - When breast cancer treatment leads to early menopause

<http://www.menstruationresearch.org/2016/04/14/when-breast-cancer-treatment-leads-to-early-menopause/>

[Blog Post – Mayim Hayim – Living Waters](http://www.menstruationresearch.org/2016/04/14/when-breast-cancer-treatment-leads-to-early-menopause/) May 11, 2016 - [What Water Means to Me](http://www.menstruationresearch.org/2016/04/14/when-breast-cancer-treatment-leads-to-early-menopause/)

<https://mayyimhayyimblog.com/2016/05/11/what-water-means-to-me/>



## Prof. Orly Sarid

### Publications

Shraga Y, **Sarid O**, Cwikel J, Reuveni H. (2016). Well child visits regarding growth and development of infants: A cross-cultural comparison. *Harefuah*, 155 (7). (Hebrew

Segal Engelchin D, & **Sarid O**. (2015). Brief intervention effectiveness on stress among Nepalese people indirectly exposed to the disaster. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 1-5.

Shelef L, Ayzen A, Yavnai N, Fruchter E, & **Sarid O**. (2016). Suicide attempts among soldiers: socio-demographic characteristics. *Disaster & Military Medicine*, 5, 2-10.

Slonim-Nevo V, **Sarid O**, Friger M, Schwartz D, Chernin E, Shahar I, Sergienko R, Vardi H, Rosenthal A, Mushkalo A, Dizengof V, Ben-Yakov G, Abu-Freha N, Munteanu D, Gaspar N, Eidelman L, Segal A, Fich, E, Greenberg D, & Odes O on behalf of the Israeli IBD Research Nucleus (IIRN). (2016). Association of adverse life events and family relations with the psychological and medical condition of patients with Crohn's Disease. *European Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, 28(9), 1073-1081

Oz I, Tatsa-Laur L, Kreiss Y, Fruchter E, Itzhak A, **Sarid O**. (2016). Early psychological intervention following the 2014 Nepal snowstorm. *Disaster and Military Medicine*, 2 (10), 1-5.

Kanat-Maymon Y, **Sarid O**, Mirsky J, Slonim-Nevo V. (2016). Gaps between immigrant spouses in host country language proficiency *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*. 150(6), 793-80. (Citations:

**Sarid O**, Isralowitz R, Yehudai M, & Reznik A. (2016). Suicidal ideation among heroin abusing mothers in methadone maintenance. *Crisis*, 37 (6).

**Sarid O**, Cwikel J, Czamanski-Cohen J & Huss E. (2016). Treating women with perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD) with a hybrid cognitive behavioral and art therapy treatment (CB-ART). *Archives of Women's Mental Health*, 1-3

Czamanski-Cohen J, **Sarid O**, Cwikel J, Levitas E, Lunenfeld E, & Har-Vardi I. (2016). Cognitive behavioral interventions reduced perceived stress and increased pregnancy rates during IVF treatment. *Journal of Reproductive Health and Medicine*.

**Sarid O**, & Zaccai M. (2016). Changes in mood states are induced by smelling familiar and exotic fragrances. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7 (article 1724), 1-7

Grinstein-Cohen O, Katz A, **Sarid O**. (2016). Religiosity: its impact on coping styles among women undergoing fertility treatment. *Journal of Religion & Health*, 1-10.

Slonim-Nevo V, **Sarid O**, Friger M, Schwartz D, Greenberg D, Sergienko R, Vardi H, & Odes S. (2017). Effect of threatening life experiences and adverse family relations in ulcerative colitis: Analysis using structural equation modeling, and comparison with Crohn's disease. *European Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology*

Isralowitz R, **Sarid O**, Dagan A, Grinstein-Cohen O & Reznik A. (2017). Alcohol consumption among female university students in Israel: a cross sectional study of background characteristics and drinking patterns. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* DOI 10.1007/s11469-017-9734-2

### Conferences

2016 **Sarid O** Shraga Y, Cwikel, K, Pereg A, Reuveni H. The effect of ethno-culture and health beliefs on mothers' vaccination behavior. 6th European Conference for Social Work Research. 30 March - 1 April, Lisbon, Portugal.

2016 Tzur-Peled S, **Sarid O**, Kushnir T. Perceptions of nurses regarding prenatal care of lesbian patients in women's health care centers. 20th Congress of the Psychosomatic Section of the Spanish Society of Gynaecology and Obstetrics, SEGO, 12-14 May, Malaga, Spain.

2016, **Sarid O**, Slonim-Nevo, V, Vardi, H, Schwartz D. Greenberg D, Friger M, Odes S. Daily hassles affect the somatic and psychological health of patients with Crohn disease. Digestive Disease Week (DDW). May 21-24, San Diego, CA.

2016, Simhi M, Cwikel J, **Sarid O**, Rowe H, Fisher J. WAWA – "What Am I Worried About": Adapting an Australian intervention for new mothers residing in the community with symptoms of anxiety and depression. The International Marcé Conference, September 26-28, Melbourne, Australia.

2016 **Sarid O**, Slonim-Nevo, V, Vardi, H, Schwartz D. Greenberg D, Friger M, Odes S. Satisfaction with life and coping in Crohn's Disease: A gender perspective. United European Gastroenterology Wed meeting, 15-19 October, Vienna, Austria.

### **Prof. Dorit Segal-Engelchin**

#### **Publications**

**Segal-Engelchin, D.**, Huss, E., & Massry, N. (2016). The experience of early marriage: Perspectives of engaged and married Muslim women in Israel. Journal of Adolescent Research, 31(6) 725–749.

**Segal-Engelchin, D.**, Sarid, O. (2016). Brief intervention effectiveness on stress among Nepalese people indirectly exposed to the Nepal earthquake. International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 14(1), 1-5.

Pruginin, I., & **Segal-Engelchin, D.**, Isralowitz, R., & Reznik, A. (2016). Shared war reality effects on the professional quality of life of mental health professionals. Israel Journal of Health Policy Research, 5:17. doi: 10.1186/s13584-016-0075-6

#### **Conferences**

Aizen, T., & **Segal-Engelchin, D.** (2016). The experience of establishing a relationship with a widower with young children. The 7th Israeli Conference on Qualitative Research, February, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel.

Nevo, T., & **Segal-Engelchin, D.** (2016). Choosing a sperm donor as a route to motherhood. The 7th Israeli Conference on Qualitative Research, February, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel

**Segal-Engelchin, D.**, Sarid, O., & Isralowitz, R. (2016). Art-based intervention effectiveness on stress among Nepalese people indirectly exposed to the Nepal earthquake. 6th European Conference for Social Work Research, March, Lisbon, Portugal.

Hoffer, L., **Segal-Engelchin, D.**, Kaplan, G., Bar Oz, A., & Shvarts, S. (2016). The bald girls: A follow-up study of women treated by irradiation for ringworm in the 1950s—Historical, health and psychosocial perspectives. 89th Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine, April, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.

Hoffer, L., **Segal-Engelchin, D.**, Kaplan, G., Bar Oz, A., & Shvarts, S. (2016). (Un) Covering bald heads. The 6th International Jerusalem Conference on Health Policy, May, Jerusalem, Israel.

### **Grants**

2016-2020 *Israel Science Foundation*. **Segal-Engelchin, D.**, & Shvarts, S. Silenced voices: women treated by irradiation for ringworm in the 1950s – historical, health and psycho-social perspectives.

### **Prof. Ilana Shoham-Vardi**

Lubotzky-Gete S, **Shoham-Vardi I**, Sheiner E. Comparing Pregnancy Outcomes of Immigrants from Ethiopia and the Former Soviet Union to Israel, to those of Native-Born Israelis. *J. Immigr. Minor Health* 2016 Aug. 24 [Epub ahead of print]

Kessous R, **Shoham-Vardi I**, Parientel G, Sheiner E. Association between pregnancy complications and long term maternal cardiovascular morbidity. *Harefuah*. 2016 May;155(5):286-90, 322. Review. Hebrew.

Walfisch A, Beharier O, **Shoham-Vardi I**, Sergienko R, Landau D, Sheiner E Placenta previa and long-term morbidity of the term offspring. *Eur J Obstet Gynecol Reprod Biol*. 2016 Aug;203:1-4. doi: 10.1016/j.ejogrb.2016.05.001.

Ben-Yaakov RD, Kessous R, **Shoham-Vardi I**, Sergienko R, Pariente G, Sheiner E. Fertility Treatments in Women Who Become Pregnant and Carried to Viability, and the Risk for Long-Term Maternal Cardiovascular Morbidity. *Am J Perinatol*. 2016 Dec;33(14):1388-1393.

Nahum Sacks K, Friger M, **Shoham-Vardi I**, Abokaf H, Spiegel E, Sergienko R, Landau D, Sheiner E. Prenatal exposure to gestational diabetes mellitus as an independent risk factor for long-term neuropsychiatric morbidity of the offspring. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 2016 Sep;215(3):380.e1-7. doi: 10.1016/j.ajog.2016.03.030.

Okby R, **Shoham-Vardi I**, Sergienko R, Sheiner E. Twin pregnancy: is it a risk factor for long-term cardiovascular disease? *J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med*. 2016;29(10):1626-30. doi: 10.3109/14767058.2015.1057491.

Wolak T, **Shoham-Vardi I**, Sergienko R, Sheiner E. Renal function during pregnancy may predict risk of future hospitalization due to atherosclerotic-related morbidity. *Nephrology (Carlton)*. 2016 Feb;21(2):116-21. doi: 10.1111/nep.12575

## **Students graduating in 2016**

Rasmiah Abu Rabia, "Service accessibility and users' characteristics as factors affecting utilization patterns of prenatal genetic services in the Bedouin Negev Population", PhD (Jointly with Prof O. Birk)