I hope all of our colleagues in the northeast US have shoveled their way out from under Nemo (when did we start naming every storm?), and for those of us who look at snow as an opportunity rather than a problem, I hope you have enjoyed some skiing, snowshoeing, or tobogganing.

In the meantime, the SPER executive committee has been working hard to plan for the upcoming annual meeting and the next year. The 2013 meeting in Boston is going to be a fun one. Doug Altman of Oxford, who has made important contributions to almost all aspects of applied statistics, will talk about methodological issues in the study of fetal growth. Gary Shaw is organizing a panel discussion on advocacy in reproductive and perinatal epidemiology, which should be as exciting, if not more than the discussion on the future of our field at last year’s meeting. We had a very successful call for abstracts, and reviews for contributed sessions are underway; this will no doubt lead to a vibrant and exciting scientific program. Finally, we have a great methods workshop planned, with Whitney Robinson and Enrique Schisterman both presenting.

Please note the upcoming deadlines for the Heinz Berendes award, the Student Prize, and the Rising Star and Mentoring awards. Please consider nominating a deserving student or colleague for these awards. The regulations for a few of the awards have changed slightly since last year (mainly for clarification), so pay careful attention to the updated information on the website.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS:
2013 SPER ANNUAL MEETING DEADLINES OF INTEREST

The deadline for all submissions is 5:00 PM PT on the scheduled day.

Heinz Berendes International Travel Award: Friday, March 15, 2013
Student Prize Paper Award: Friday, March 15, 2013
Rising Star Award: Friday, April 12, 2013
Mentoring Award: Friday, April 12, 2013

For more information: http://sper.org/awards.html
If anyone is interested in running for SPER office, we have three open positions. We are actively soliciting candidates, so if you know of a candidate for Member-At-Large, Secretary, or President, please do let me (robert.platt@mcgill.ca), or Brian Whitcomb (bwhitcomb@schoolph.umass.edu), know. If you have questions about the positions, or the process, don’t hesitate to contact us.

Finally, SPER is active on several external fronts. Russ Kirby and I represent SPER on the Joint Policy Committee of the Societies of Epidemiology, and the Society is an active participant in the planning for the next Congress of Epidemiology, which will likely take place in 2016 and follows on the very successful 2011 meeting in Montreal. We are negotiating to be one of the primary sponsors of the meeting, and to contribute to several aspects of the Congress.

As always, if you have ideas for how to improve our organization, thoughts, questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me or other members of the executive committee.

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2013 SPER PRE-MEETING WORKSHOP PREVIEW

We are pleased to offer the Advanced Methods Workshop immediately preceding the SPER Annual Meeting. When you register for the meeting, don’t forget to register for the Advanced Methods Workshop!

**Propensity-score analysis: matching, weighting, and stratification in Stata and R**

Drs. Whitney Robinson (UNC-Chapel Hill) and Brian Lee (Drexel University) will lead a workshop on the use of propensity-score adjustment in analysis of observational data. First, there will be an overview of the similarities and differences between propensity-score methods and standard regression. Most of the workshop will consist of applied examples, including an example of propensity-score matching using Stata’s psmatch2 module and propensity-score adjustment via weighting or stratification in R.

**Biomarkers and measurement error beyond conventional methods**

Dr. Enrique Schisterman (NICHD) will lead a workshop on biomarkers and measurement error. Epidemiological studies of every disease and design type are increasingly reliant upon biomarkers. Measurement of and analysis including biomarkers is not without complication however. Random error can be introduced at every stage of a study up to analysis as well as systematic error and limit of detection issues in entering during measurement. Causal inference related analysis issues can introduce an entire new set of errors and biases. Acknowledging these complications, we can address biomarker related issues reducing bias and measurement error through design and analysis methods that go beyond convention.
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: SPER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Nominations are being sought for President (2013-2016), Secretary (2013-2016), one Member-at-Large (2013-2017), and the SPER Student Representative (2013-2014). All terms will begin at the close of the June 2013 annual meeting. Members of SPER may nominate themselves or any other member of SPER.

The President will serve as President-Elect (2013-2014), President (2014-2015) and Past President (2015-2016). The main duties of the President-Elect are to help the President develop plans for the annual meeting and to chair the selection of the Student Prize Paper Award recipient; the President designs the program for the annual meeting and is in charge of Executive Committee decision-making; and the Past President chairs the selection of the Heinz Berendes International Travel Award recipient and provides input as needed.

The Secretary is involved in all Executive Committee activities, works with the President to schedule conference calls and takes minutes, and develops the annual meeting brochure and works on planning the logistics for the annual meeting in coordination with the Utah Conference Services.

The Member-at-Large participates in all Executive Committee activities. The unique tasks assigned to the Member-at-Large elected this cycle are to coordinate and prepare SPER newsletters that are distributed to the membership and to coordinate and implement strategies to recruit new members. This member will replace Anjel Vahratian.

The Student Representative participates in Executive Committee meetings, encourages and facilitates student participation in SPER and works on the Advanced Methods Workshop, which precedes the annual meeting. This member will replace Anna Pollack.

This call for nominations will be posted on the SPER website. Nominations are due by March 22, 2013 and should be sent to Brian Whitcomb at bwhitcomb@schoolph.umass.edu. You can also contact Brian for more information by email or by phone at (413) 577-7440. The slate of candidates and ballot will be presented to the membership for electronic voting to take place in April 2013.

2ND ANNUAL RPE TRAINEE MIXER

RPE faculty and trainees! Mark your calendars for Monday evening, June 17th. After our successful mixer in Minneapolis, we’re looking forward to meeting again in Boston. Look for details in the SPER Spring Newsletter. Contact Martha Werler (werler@bu.edu) with ideas or questions.
2013 HEINZ BERENDES INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AWARD

The Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research (SPER) requests submissions of manuscripts for the Heinz Berendes International Travel Award. The manuscript should represent work in reproductive, perinatal, or pediatric epidemiology, and research that concerns populations in developing countries. The winner will present the selected paper at the SPER Annual Meeting. An award of $250 plus expenses for travel, 2 days lodging, and SPER Annual Meeting registration will be given to the author of the paper.

Eligibility - To be eligible for this award, the applicant should have completed this work outside of the US or Canada and should not have resided in the US or Canada. The paper must be unpublished at the time of submission. Authors do not have to be SPER members to apply for the award but are asked to join SPER if selected for presentation.

Submission - The submitted manuscript should be prepared according to the Author Guidelines in the journal Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology (PPE).

The submission deadline is Friday, March 15, 2013 at 5pm Pacific Time. The following required document must be submitted with the application in PDF format:

1. Manuscript in PPE format - saved as a PDF file.
2. Name and address of academic affiliation or research establishment
3. Country of residence for previous six months

Evaluation of Applications - Applications will be evaluated by a committee chaired by the SPER Past-President. The committee will be composed of the SPER Past-President, and 4 members of SPER chosen at the discretion of the SPER Past-President. The paper will be evaluated according to 5 distinct criteria: originality, soundness of analytical methods, biological rationale, global impact, and public health importance.
The Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research (SPER) requests manuscript submissions for consideration for the annual Student Prize Paper Award. This competition is open to graduate and medical students, postdoctoral fellows, medical residents, research trainees, and clinical fellows interested in reproductive, perinatal, and pediatric epidemiology. The winner of the award will present the selected paper at the SPER Annual Meeting. An award of $500 plus expenses for travel, 2 days lodging, and SPER Annual Meeting registration will be given to the author of the selected paper.

Eligibility - To be eligible for student status at the meeting, individuals must be students, trainees or fellows at an academic or research institution at the time of the submission. Documentation of student or trainee status is required. The submitted paper must be written by and represent work in reproductive, perinatal, or pediatric epidemiology conducted by the student/trainee during the two years before that upcoming meeting.

Submission - The submitted manuscript should be prepared according to the Author Guidelines in the journal Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology.

The submission deadline is Friday, March 15, 2013 at 5pm Pacific Time. The following required documents must be submitted with the application in ONE PDF file:

1. Manuscript in PPE format
2. Letter of support from mentor under whom the work was completed indicating student or trainee's specific contribution

The author may submit the paper simultaneously to the Abraham Lillienfeld Student Prize Paper competition of the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER); however, if the paper is selected for that award, it will not be eligible for the SPER award. Authors do not have to be SPER members to apply for the award but are asked to join SPER if selected for presentation.

Evaluation of Applications - Applications will be evaluated by a committee chaired by the SPER President-Elect. The committee will be composed of the SPER President-Elect, and 4 members of SPER chosen at the discretion of the SPER President-Elect. The paper will be evaluated according to 6 distinct criteria: originality, soundness of analytical methods, biological rationale, involvement of student in data collection, letter of support from mentor, and public health importance.
2013 SPER Mentoring Award

This award is to recognize the importance of dedicated and skilled mentors in the development of reproductive, pediatric, and perinatal epidemiologists (RPPE) at all levels. The nominees will be evaluated based on proficiency in mentoring skills, dedication to mentoring, and attention to advisee development both technically, professionally, and personally in the field of RPPE epidemiology. Nominees should demonstrate effective people skills, motivate and inspire the mentee to excel, and should serve as a role model, teaching and demonstrating high standards of performance and integrity. A $500 prize is awarded.

Eligibility - Individuals with an established career from academia, government, or the private sector are eligible. Candidates should be at the Associate Professor rank or above if in academia or at an equivalent senior rank in government agencies or industry. Nominees must be SPER members in good standing.

The submission deadline is Friday, April 12, 2013 at 5pm Pacific Time. The following required documents must be submitted with the application in ONE PDF file:

1. A letter of nomination from a SPER member
2. No more than two additional letters from persons who have been or currently are being mentored by the nominee (including but not limited to student advisees, junior faculty or staff)
3. The nominee's curriculum vitae including a list of mentoring activities (trainees, junior faculty, and staff)

Evaluation of Applications - Nominations will be evaluated by a committee chaired by the SPER President-Elect. The committee will be composed of the SPER President-Elect, and 4 members of SPER chosen at the discretion of the SPER President-Elect. Individuals will be evaluated according to 4 distinct criteria: evidence of mentee’s success, letters of recommendation, contributions to the field as a mentor, and participation in SPER activities. There is an important distinction between academic standing and mentoring accomplishments. This award is intended to highlight individuals as mentors only. Nomination packages will be considered for 1 year after nomination and will be automatically re-evaluated as a candidate for the next selection of the Mentor Award. It is at the discretion of the nominator to update any relevant information.

Become a Member of SPER!

It is time to renew your SPER membership for 2013. Members who registered in 2012 should have received an email which provided a member ID for access to the “Members’ Only” section where you can renew online. Please contact SPER Treasurer, Danelle Lobdell, at membership@sper.org if you did not receive your member ID or have any questions.

If you are not currently a member of SPER, but would like to become one, please visit the following link for more information: http://www.sper.org/membership.php.
2013 SPER Rising Star Award

This award is to recognize early to mid-career investigators whose achievements and potential set them on a trajectory to become research leaders in the field of reproductive, perinatal and pediatric epidemiology. Overall research contributions thus far, including publications, presentations, and influence on the field will be considered. An additional important consideration is the candidate’s likely future role, as his/her career continues to evolve. SPER registration will be covered for the winner and a $500 prize is awarded.

Eligibility - Early to mid-career investigators from academia, government, or the private sector are eligible. Candidates should be at the Assistant to Associate Professor rank if in academia (more advanced than post-doctoral fellow, but not at the full professor level) or an equivalent employment status if outside academia. The time since the highest degree should be no more than 7 years. Potential candidates may be nominated by any SPER member, however, the nominated individuals are responsible for submitting the Rising Star package outlined below. Candidates must be current members of SPER in good standing.

The submission deadline is **Friday, April 12, 2013 at 5pm Pacific Time.** The following required documents must be submitted with the application in ONE PDF file:

1. A letter of nomination from a SPER member outlining specific achievements and career trajectory
2. Copies of the nominee’s three most important publications
3. The nominee’s curriculum vitae
4. Maximum of two letters of recommendation

Evaluation of Applications - Nominations will be evaluated by a committee chaired by the SPER President-Elect. The committee will be composed of the SPER President-Elect, and 4 members of SPER chosen at the discretion of the SPER President-Elect. Individuals will be evaluated according to 4 distinct criteria: originality of the body of work supported only by the three papers submitted with the application, involvement in SPER activities, strength of letters of nomination and recommendation, evaluation of curriculum vitae (for evidence of outstanding accomplishment in a short period of time and a positive trajectory).