

Winter 2016



## **Editors' Note**

This issue of THE PERIODICAL includes news about some SMCR member activities as well as reports on the Fall Board meeting, *Women's Reproductive Health* publications, and upcoming events. We're certain that there's more to mention but people are too modest to say so. But as Cher famously said in one of her starring roles, "Snap out of it!" At least do so by April 15, the deadline for the next issue. Share news of accomplishments, publications, exhibitions, awards, activism, etc. Your success will inspire others—so share the inspiration.

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## **President's Report**

## Summary of the December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Board Conference Call Meeting

1. **Welcome and congratulations to the new Board Members/Officers:** Jax Gonzalez, Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris, Evelina Weidman Sterling, and Mindy Erchull. Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris was elected, by Board vote, as our new Secretary. Mindy Erchull will continue as our Membership Coordinator.
2. **Menstrual Hygiene Day (MHD) by David Linton:** Menstrual Hygiene Day (MHD) is May 28<sup>th</sup> next year. David introduced the idea of having another Making Menstruation Matter Award be presented at MHD, which could increase the visibility of SMCR. David suggested Judy Blume, author of the young adult classic *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, as a possible awardee and acknowledged that we would need SMCR commitment to endorse this and any potential financial component of the award. Chris Bobel encouraged David to put together an MHD team who could put together a proposal for the board to review. Jax and Evelina volunteered to help, pointing out the opportunity to expand the presence of SMCR. Evelina pointed out that it would be good to make sure that what we do in the “off year” is complementary to what we do for our conference year. MHD Team now consists of David, Evelina, Jax, who will work on putting together a proposal.
3. **SMCR Newsletter:** David has expressed difficulty getting material submitted and encouraged Board members to send something. The response rate has been extraordinarily low. Please consider submitting material for our newsletters – contact David Linton ([dlinton@mmm.edu](mailto:dlinton@mmm.edu))! David will send out the next deadline via the SMCR members email list.
4. **Archiving Documents by Chris Bobel:** Chris explained that she is working with someone assigned to our collection housed at [The Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America](#) to provide guidance regarding submitting new material to the archives. Peggy Stubbs reminded that people who hosted conferences might have materials that should also be uploaded to the Board Dropbox. If you have documents that need to be archived, please send to Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris ([tavlarj@tcnj.edu](mailto:tavlarj@tcnj.edu)).
5. **re:Cycling Editorial Board Report—Laura Wershler:** Laura reported that 3 of the posts from the menarche theme are in the top 20 views for previous year with several comments. There have not been a lot of responses to the activism posts. Laura is working on figuring out a way to assess views and FB/Twitter shares. She expressed appreciation for those who have contributed and encourages more participation. [lwershler@gmail.com](mailto:lwershler@gmail.com)
6. **Activist Engagements Update [FemCare in Prisons; Wikipedia Project; Robin Danielson Bill] by Breanne Fahs:** Breanne reported that the [SMCR Wikipedia page](#) is now live. She will

continue to migrate content from our website to the page. She asked the Board and members to brainstorm places SMCR should be listed on Wikipedia pages, including sister organization and topical pages. Breanne reported that she was in contact with the volunteers working on the Prisons project [an initiative to improve menstrual care access in US prisons]. Volunteers are still trying to determine how best to be helpful and connect with organizations already working with incarcerated women. Breanne is also thinking about ways to get people involved in contributing to the activism [blog](#). Finally, Breanne is trying to find specific ways that members of SMCR can support [The Robin Danielson Feminine Hygiene Product Safety Act \(H.R. 1708\)](#). If anyone is interested in helping with these important activism projects, please contact Breanne ([breanne.fahs@asu.edu](mailto:breanne.fahs@asu.edu))!

7. **2017 Conference Planning Update by Evelina Weidman Sterling:** Evelina would like to have a public health focus for the Atlanta conference. She is working on coming up with a budget and thinking through the purpose of our conference (beyond activism and changing the culture around menstruation). She is interested in thinking more about how we can use our research to get to those who are not part of the organization, so that they can use the information to improve women's health overall. Evelina is writing a grant application due May 1<sup>st</sup> (Agency for Health Research and Quality). She has a good local team in Atlanta but asked how the Board would like to be involved. [evelinaws@yahoo.com](mailto:evelinaws@yahoo.com)!
  
8. **NEW VIEW Conference Co Sponsorship Request-Chris Bobel & Brief Treasury Report:** Chris introduced a conference co-sponsorship request for \$500 from Leonore Tiefer. The [New View campaign](#) is planning a conference titled "Critique-Resist-Transform: Feminist Scholar Activism and the New View Campaign" (October 6-8 at Indiana University). Chris asked Peggy to provide information about our finances so that the Board could decide if we have the money to support the request. Peggy gave the following report about SMCR finances: We were able to return the money borrowed for the conference and returned a profit \$4,187 (after splitting with our partner, the [Center for Women's Health & Human Rights](#)). Chris added that there were additional raffle proceeds of \$450. Peggy reported that the combined funds in our checking and savings account is \$66,827.33. Chris called for a Motion with the terms specified. Peggy made motion to sponsor for \$500 – second from Ingrid. All in favor – motion carried.
  
9. **Updates for SMCR's journal *Women's Reproductive Health*:** In 2016, WRH will publish 3 issues and the spring issue is almost ready to go to press. Jane Ussher and Chris Bobel reminded the Board about the special issues they are co-editing ("Cancer and Women's Reproductive Health" and "Menstrual Health: A Matter of Human Rights", respectively). Chris also reminded the Board to write to Editor Joan Chrisler with ideas for a recurring special section

on “classics” (exciting or innovative papers presented at any SMCR conference). All members are invited to submit suggestions to Joan at [jchr@conncoll.edu](mailto:jchr@conncoll.edu).

## Journal News

If you are teaching a graduate or upper-level undergraduate course that includes menopause, consider adding the articles from the special section on postmenopausal hormone therapy to your reading list. The special section (which appeared in vol. 2, no. 1, spring 2015) includes an overview article by Paula Derry (psychology), with a multidisciplinary set of commentaries by Adriane Fugh-Berman (medicine), Heather Dillaway (sociology), Lynette Leidy Sievert (anthropology), and Nancy Fugate Woods (nursing). A response to the commentaries by Paula Derry was published in the most recent issue of *Women's Reproductive Health* (vol. 2, no. 2, fall 2015). The full set (anchor article, commentaries, response to commentaries) makes a multidisciplinary and provocative package of readings that is sure to elicit class discussion.

Watch for more special sections coming up soon! We are working on one on off-label uses of oral contraceptives with adolescents and another on toxic shock syndrome.

Two special issues of the journal are also in the works: one on Cancer and Women's Reproductive Health (Guest Editors: Lisa R. Rubin & Jane M. Ussher) and the other on Menstrual Health: A Matter of Human Rights (Guest Editors: Chris Bobel & Amy Agigian).

In 2016 the journal moves to three issues per volume. The spring issue (vol. 3, no. 1) is already in press. It includes articles, book reviews, and a media review on such diverse topics as menstruation, breastfeeding, birth, prenatal care, abortion, and sex education. Happy reading!

### **What is the most innovative or exciting paper you ever heard presented at an SMCR conference?**

*Women's Reproductive Health*, the official journal of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, plans to debut an occasional feature in which a classic paper from an SMCR conference is reprinted and followed by commentaries from several scholars. Commentaries could describe the importance of the paper at the time it was presented, its impact on later research, its impact on the career of the commentator, or its impact on women's health care delivery.

It can be difficult to get permission to reprint journal articles, but most of SMCR's books (based on conference presentations) are out of print, and at least two of them were published by Hemisphere, which

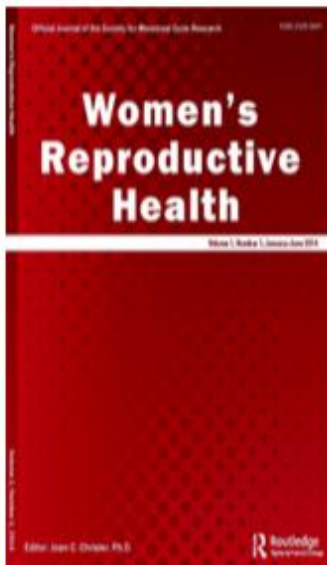
was acquired by Taylor & Francis, our journal's publisher. Thus, chapters from those books might make the best target for this feature, both because permission to republish would be easy to get and because the classics in those books are likely to be unfamiliar to young researchers and otherwise difficult to locate. Reprinting a classic paper from time to time would make the papers available once more and provide an opportunity for them to inspire a new generation of health care providers and menstrual cycle researchers and activists.

So, help us get this feature off by the ground by suggesting a classic SMCR paper that you would like to see revisited.

The editor has her favorite papers, but what are yours? Write to Joan Chrisler ([jchr@conncoll.edu](mailto:jchr@conncoll.edu)) to nominate a classic that you would like to see revisited.

What Can You Do to Make SMCR's Journal a Success?

- Read it!
- Submit your best work to *Women's Reproductive Health*.
- Tell your colleagues and students about the journal; encourage them to submit their best work.
- Ask your college, university, medical center, or other institutional library to subscribe to *WRH*.
- Cite articles from *WRH* in your publications, especially those sent to other journals.
- When you are asked to review a manuscript, say yes!
- Blog about articles in *WRH* or cite them in your blog posts.
- Announce the contents of the issues on your *Facebook* page or website.
- Announce the contents of the issues on professional listservs.
- Tweet about interesting articles you read in *WRH*.



## CALL FOR PAPERS **MENSTRUAL HEALTH: A MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

This special issue of *Women's Reproductive Health* will highlight feminist scholarship that uses a human rights frame to address menstrual health.

Menstrual health is central to women's ability to thrive in every society in every part of the world. Without menstrual health in place, other human rights, such as the right to health and the right to be free from discrimination, remain in jeopardy. Yet menstrual health is only beginning to gain recognition as a human rights issue. And menstrual health remains under theorized in the social sciences and public policy.

This special issue aims to spark scholars of the menstrual cycle to consider and develop the human rights implications of their work. Equally, we hope to encourage those working in related human rights arenas to make this critical yet still marginalized issue factor more explicitly in their work.

Topics might include:

- Case studies that demonstrate human rights/menstrual health program implementation
- Policy [local, national and/or international] approaches to ensuring women's human rights vis a vis the menstrual cycle
- Theoretical engagements with the human rights involved in menstrual health, e.g., the right to health, right to equality, right to employment
- Critiques of, or discussions of the limitations of, the human rights approach
- Reproductive justice approaches to the menstrual cycle such as linking menstrual health with abortion, contraception and other reproductive issues
- Schools, workplaces and other contexts as loci for menstrual health/human rights education
- Considerations of cultural practices and traditions and beliefs around menstruation

Original papers using quantitative and/or qualitative approaches, as well as theoretical papers are welcome. Creative writing will also be considered. *However, we will NOT accept papers focused on new menstrual care innovations or related consumer product development.*

Manuscripts [between 6000 and 8500 words] must be prepared in APA style and submitted via email as Word attachments to the journal's editor Joan C. Chrisler at [jchr@conncoll.edu](mailto:jchr@conncoll.edu). Please also CC the guest editors at [chris.bobel@umb.edu](mailto:chris.bobel@umb.edu) and [aagigian@suffolk.edu](mailto:aagigian@suffolk.edu). All submissions will be double blind reviewed by 2-3 content experts.

**Deadline for submissions is January 30, 2016, though we are willing to negotiate a later deadline, within reason, if necessary.**

*Women's Reproductive Health* is an interdisciplinary journal, which welcomes authors in any field who address the topic from a feminist perspective. To learn more about the journal, go [here](#)

Please address queries to the guest editors Amy Agigian and Chris Bobel at [aagigian@suffolk.edu](mailto:aagigian@suffolk.edu) and [chris.bobel@umb.edu](mailto:chris.bobel@umb.edu).

Membership News

**David Linton**, in addition to editing the SMCR newsletter, along with Saniya Lee Ghanoui, is part of the *re:Cycling* blog team. He has also written a series of menstrual-themed poems which he will be performing at a Showcase under the auspices of Michael Geffner's INSPIRED WORD events in New York City. In addition, he is completing a chapter for an edited collection about American Literature in the 1970's. His analysis will focus on the presence of menstrual references in novels of the period and the social context that gave rise to them.

**Maje Girona Magraner**, the PhD undertaken at the Public University of Navarra and the University of Berkeley, under the name "Discomfort in Women: menopause, menstruación and food problems" aims to reflect on the relationship between physiological and natural processes of women and how the society, under terms as the right to health and welfare, discredits the influence of large medical corporations, the construction of identity and concepts of femininity and gender. From the anthropology of health, human rights and my training expert in the area of feminism and gender, I make a critical and constructive international agencies as regulators of health analysis and therefore responsible for the discomforts in women, as well as the violation of rights to which they are subjected. My research shows the urgent need for regeneration of these organisms as support structures while generating incentives towards implementing accountability mechanisms to improve health.

While technical solutions can mitigate immediate consequences, sustainable progress will depend on more profound changes that a sustainable model necessarily redefine human rights, health rights from the perspective of gender and health policies, so that public intervention is also an individual and collective action, and go for a paradigm shift towards institutional change, where culture, gender and science work together towards the evaluation and implementation of public health policies of equity.

**Christine Mwangi**, as an AmeriCorps VISTA serving my year of service (Feb' 2015–Feb' 2016) at Bethany Christian Services in West Michigan, I have developed a Menstrual Hygiene Management Curriculum for refugee women. The curriculum is in response to a need identified by employers to educate refugee women on personal and menstrual hygiene. The course

objectives will address the gap of knowledge that some refugee women have in female anatomy and its role in menstruation and reproduction, the use and disposal of menstruation products available in the United States, familiarity with United States laws against female genital mutilation and information about women's health providers in the community. Women will take home kits of product samples and printed materials acquired through donations following the training. This workshop, due to commence in January 2016 will be targeted towards newly resettled refugee women 18 years and over. To volunteer or donate, log onto [bethany.org/refugee](http://bethany.org/refugee).

### **Pushing the pedals for the period: News from Rachel Saudek**

Want to go on a pro-period adventure? Sustainable Cycles is a collective of cyclists that rides bicycles throughout the country to spark conversation about menstruation, health, and environmental health. In 2015, seven womyn rode their bikes across the United States to the SMCR Conference in Boston, giving workshops about menstrual cups, reusable pads, sea sponges, and all things period along the way. We are currently seeking sponsors and riders for our Spring 2017 Tour, ending at the SMCR Conference in Atlanta. Our bike tours are low-cost and eco-friendly. Learn more at [www.sustainablecycles.org](http://www.sustainablecycles.org).

[Denise Orzo](#) is an artist, birth doula & co-founder/curator of [O+ Festival](#), a non-profit organization that recognizes the cultural contribution of artists & musicians to a thriving community by connecting them with art loving health & wellness providers. Discovering SMCR has been a catalyst, holistically synthesizing her artist/activist practice. Inspired by attending the 2015 SMCR conference, Denise resumed painting with her menstrual blood, a practice she began in 2011, thanks to a menstrual cup. She lives & works in Kingston, NY. ([deniseorzo.com](http://deniseorzo.com); [opositivefestival.org](http://opositivefestival.org))

**Joan Chrisler** and **Jenny Gorman** contributed an article about Menstruation in the *Encyclopedia of Mental Health* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 3, pp. 75–81, 2016), which was recently published by Elsevier.



**Saniya Lee Ghanoui** continues working on a project examining menstrual and sex education films in the United States and Sweden. In addition to co-editing the newsletter she works as an assistant editor for Notches: (re)marks on the history of sexuality, a peer-reviewed, collaborative, and international history of sexuality blog.

### **Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research (CeMCOR) 2015 News:**

**Dr. Shirin Kalyan**, immunologist, translational scientist and trained in issues of women's reproduction, sex and gender and bone metabolism has recently become an Assistant Professor working with CeMCOR in the University of British Columbia. She is a von Humboldt Fellow who discovered immune disturbances related to bisphosphonate associated osteoporosis of the jaw. Her goal is to integrate an understanding of sex-related immune differences with reproduction and lifestyle. This is the first time in CeMCOR's almost 14 years that there have been two full-time academics to do research studies and knowledge translation.

Although we now have 104 completed participants and have exceeded our enrolment goals, we continue to actively recruit into a Canada-wide study of progesterone for perimenopausal hot flushes. We have extended recruitment to the end of October, 2017 and the number of enrolled participants to 250 because a pre-planned, blinded interim analysis of the standard deviation of vasomotor symptoms (VMS) in the last 28 days of therapy was importantly higher than our estimate (20% greater than for VMS in menopausal women). Interestingly, although VMS start in perimenopause and are more frequent and intense during this life phase, no previous RCT has tested a therapy only in perimenopausal women!

This year we published (PLOS One) the first large whole-population study of the point prevalence of ovulation in spontaneously (without hormonal contraception) regularly cycling women ages 20–49.9 with normal-length menstrual cycles. It showed that over a third of all cycles were without a cycle-timed progesterone level of 9.54 nmol/L (3.0 ng/ml) or higher. The average age of the participants was 41 but age was not a significant predictor of ovulation nor was parity or when in the cycle the testing done; by current definitions these women were not perimenopausal. It is likely that some of these women were experiencing ovulatory disturbances

such as short luteal phases or luteal insufficiency.

We are actively working to understand menstrual cycles and bone health in adolescent and younger women. We have a knowledge translation grant to do a survey and focus groups as well as translate our bone health (ABCs of osteoporosis prevention) and video (Strong is the New Sexy) tools into French. Population-based data on bone change and use of combined hormonal contraception (CHC) in CaMOS women ages 16–24 show that CHC use prevents peak bone density and that the majority of these younger women first start CHC for non-contraceptive reasons (such as treatment of cramps, irregular cycles, heavy flow and acne).

**Critique ~ Resist ~ Transform**  
Feminist Scholar Activism and the  
New View Campaign

**October 6-8, 2016**  
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Sponsored by:  
New View Campaign  
Indiana University Department of Gender Studies  
Indiana University School of Public Health  
Indiana University Kinsey Institute

**THIS DYNAMIC NEW VIEW CAMPAIGN CAPSTONE** will bring together gender, sexuality, feminist, health, media and social science scholars and activists to examine the ideas and impact of **THE NEW VIEW CAMPAIGN**, a grassroots network formed in 2000 to challenge the medicalization of sexuality, and to chart the way forward.

Visit our website at <https://www.indiana.edu/~iucweb/newviewcapstone/> to learn more and check for updates.

Additional information coming soon!

To learn more about the New View Campaign, visit <http://www.newviewcampaign.org/>.

**EMBODIED RESISTANCE**  
Vol. II  
**CALL FOR PAPERS**

The volume aims to deepen our understanding of the motivations, experiences, and consequences associated with the bodies that break the rules through the intersecting lenses of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, culture, religiosity, and nation, among others.

*What to submit? Empirical research-based pieces, as well as narrative contribution (essays that explore embodied resistance from a first person perspective) from all discipline, and especially those that focus on areas outside the United States and the global North*

**Possible topics include, but are not limited to, practices that challenge:**

- **Attire norms** (e.g., women who go topless, fat women who "show skin," or individuals who cross-dress); conventional hair and body norms (e.g., men who shave their body hair or women who grow out and dye their armpit hair);
- **The binary construction of gender** (e.g., practices and performances by individuals who identify as bisexual, transgender, or queer);
- **Biological processes considered contextually taboo** (e.g., mothers who conspicuously breast-feed in public or women who do not conceal menstruation);
- **Physical conditions that carry stigma** (e.g., individuals with HIV/AIDS who openly discuss their infectious status or cancer patients who do not wear wigs);
- **Cultural, religion, and/or ethnic norms** (e.g., Muslim women who wear the hijab in spite of policies that forbid veiling)

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**  
**March 15, 2016**

Research papers should be informative, engaging, and accessible and approximately 6,000 words.  
Narratives should be approximately 1000 words.

*We welcome queries and dialogue*

Direct all inquires to co-editors  
Chris Bobel [chris.bobel@umb.edu](mailto:chris.bobel@umb.edu) and  
Samantha Kwan at [sskwan@uh.edu](mailto:sskwan@uh.edu)

