



EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT, AND COMMUNITY PEDIATRIC PRACTICE

MCH Training Program at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Faculty of the MCH Training Program conduct a wide range of research and evaluation related to early childhood health and development -- from prenatal predictors of later outcomes to the relationship of women's health and well being to the care received by their children. Highlights of faculty research include the effects of maternal poverty and stress on the health and development of their children; the effects of neighborhood context on development; the use of population health data in policymaking related to infant mortality; early determinants of adult disease; the development of cross-sector systems supporting early childhood health and development; and the role of community pediatric providers in promoting healthy child development.

Janet DiPietro studies methods of assessment of risk in infants and young children and their efficacy as predictors of outcome. Her research explores the underlying physiological basis for individual differences in cognition, socioemotional behavior, and temperament in early infancy, the neonatal period, and in utero. Dr. DiPietro developed computerized assessment methods of measuring fetal neurobehavioral functioning in order to investigate the ontogeny of development, with the ultimate goal of predicting clinical and developmental outcome from the fetal period. Her current research extends this work to examine the role of maternal factors, including poverty and psychological stress, in mediating fetal development.

Holly Grason's work centers on the development of frameworks for describing and analyzing the roles, organization, and functions of public programs serving women and children. This conceptual work has formed the basis for community, organizational, and system level assessment and quality improvement tools addressing pediatric primary care, and early childhood health and development. Ms. Grason has led large-scale evaluations of national programs geared toward improving service systems for child health and development and enhancing the involvement of community pediatricians in those systems, including national evaluations of the Dyson Foundation-funded Community Pediatrics Training Initiative, and the American Academy of Pediatrics' Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) Program.

Bernard Guyer, works on a range of issues related to child health and development, including childhood injury prevention, the causes and prevention of infant mortality, and interventions to strengthen child development. Recent interests include the early determinants of adult disease, life-course frameworks for health and well-being, and the use of population health data in policymaking. Dr. Guyer's research examines the etiological factors, prevention strategies, and systems of health care that affect child health, as well as the social and political/policy contexts for health and well-being. He has served as Principal Investigator in the national evaluations of the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program, and he is a Co-PI of a study of childhood injury prevention using Healthy Steps data.

Tama Leventhal is interested in linking developmental research with social policy for children, youth, and families, particularly low-income families with children. Her work examines individual-, family-, and community-level influences on child and adolescent well-being, with a majority of her research considering how neighborhood context affects development. Additional lines of inquiry investigate the antecedents and consequences of adolescent employment for low-income youth and the effects of early intervention and service use on vulnerable children's development.

Cynthia Minkovitz focuses her research on the delivery of preventive services to children and on understanding and improving health care provider behavior. She plays significant roles in the national evaluations of the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program and the Community Pediatrics Training Initiative. Current and proposed research building on the Healthy Steps evaluation explores the longer terms effects of the program on parental practices related to child development and behavior, children's behavior and social skills, and children's needs for referral services for behavior and development. With Donna Strobino, Dr. Minkovitz recently completed a study of the effects of maternal depressive symptoms on the use of health services among children in the Healthy Steps program.

Donna Strobino studies the social, psychosocial, and biologic risk factors for preterm birth among African American women, the organization of perinatal health services in local communities, the impact of Fetal and Infant Mortality Review programs on population-based services and activities in local communities, and the impact of the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program. Current and proposed research explores longer terms effects of the Healthy Steps program on parental practices related to child development and behavior, children's behavior and social skills, and children's needs for referral services for behavior and development.

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