Editorial Challenges

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ABSTRACT

In this column, the editor of *The Journal of Perinatal Education* (JPE) discusses some of the challenges involved in becoming the new editor of JPE. The editor also describes the contents of this issue, which offer a broad range of resources, research, and inspiration for childbirth educators in their efforts to promote normal birth.

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Since Judy Lothian and I assumed the respective roles of associate editor and editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Perinatal Education* (JPE) in 2007, we have witnessed the gestation and birth of seven, full-term, healthy issues of JPE, including two special issues—one devoted to Lamaze International’s updated Six Care Practices That Support Normal Birth (see Lamaze International, 2007c), and another devoted to Declercq, Sakala, Corry, and Applebaum’s (2006) *Listening to Mothers II* survey report (see Lamaze International, 2007b). In addition, the first issue that we produced in our new roles was not a single birth but a multiple gestation! Along with our inaugural Winter 2007 issue (JPE Volume 16, Number 1), we were so proud to introduce a supplement issue providing the evidence basis for the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services’ Ten Steps of Mother-Friendly Care (see Lamaze International, 2007a). If that wasn’t enough, we also transitioned to the use of an online electronic manuscript-submission product (Editorial Manager) to increase efficiency. Not unlike new parents, we had a lot to learn. As soon as one issue is put to bed, we must start conceiving

the next one. Keeping to deadlines remains a challenge. As new editors, Judy and I could never have managed through the transition and ongoing challenges without the support and expert assistance of our amazing editorial “doula,” Nancy Perry, JPE’s managing editor; the Lamaze International staff; the production professionals at Dartmouth Journal Services; and JPE’s excellent editorial board, outstanding columnists, and talented and committed reviewers who contribute countless hours to make JPE among the top journals that normal-birth advocates read, talk about, and submit manuscripts to for publication.

We are thrilled that the number of high-quality manuscript submissions has increased substantially. At the same time, we apologize for the longer-than-anticipated wait time from submission through review and eventual publication. Because of the increased volume of new submissions and limited space in each issue, we are often forced to

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We invite readers to respond to the contents of this issue or share comments on other topics related to promoting normal birth. Responses will be published as a letter to the editor. Please send comments to Wendy Budin, Editor-in-Chief (wendy.budin@nyu.edu).

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The entire contents of the JPE 16(1) supplement issue (The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services – Evidence Basis for the Ten Steps of Mother-Friendly Care) is available for free download from JPE's Web site (www.ingentaconnect.com/content/lamaze/jpe).

The content of all JPE issues mentioned here, as well as all JPE issues published since October 1998, are available on the journal's Web site (www.ingentaconnect.com/content/lamaze/jpe). Lamaze International members can access the site and download free copies of JPE articles by logging on at the "Members Only" link on the Lamaze Web site (www.lamaze.org).

For more information about the Lamaze International 2008 Annual Conference, "Off and Running for Normal Birth" (September 11–14, Louisville, KY), and future conferences, visit the Lamaze Web site (www.lamaze.org) or call toll-free (800) 368-4404.

delay the publication of a number of articles accepted for publication. To try to make it up to our very patient authors, we decided to publish additional peer-reviewed articles in the current issue in place of our regular columns. We hope you enjoy the increased quantity and quality of the manuscripts. And please stay tuned for the next issue, which will have more of our regularly scheduled columns.

IN THIS ISSUE

In continuing JPE's mission to promote normal birth, this issue's "Celebrate Birth!" column features a young mother, Laure Sinnhuber-Giles, who shares her story of her daughter's normal birth at home. In an accompanying thank-you letter to Ina May Gaskin, Sinnhuber-Giles also describes how, after reading *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*, her confidence was boosted and she became empowered to trust her body.

In this issue, we present a guest editorial by Nancey Rosensweig, who is a midwife, childbirth educator, and doula. She had a career as a professional modern dancer, teacher, and bodywork therapist for many years before deciding to become a midwife. After her first-time experience as a patient in a hospital, Rosensweig reflects on the vulnerability and dependence of women who undergo operative birth. Using her personal experience as a springboard, she makes a strong case for continuous support for postcesarean women during the early postpartum period and encourages childbirth educators to advocate for these women's needs and to teach them how to advocate for themselves.

In his article "Discussion Forums for Expectant Fathers: The Perspectives of Male Educators," Mark Friedewald, a clinical nurse consultant and parent educator from New South Wales, Australia, presents results of a study that describes the perspectives of men recruited to be educators and facilitate all-male discussion forums for expectant fathers within antenatal education programs. The results from this study may provide an operational framework to assist service providers in the development of male-facilitated programs for expectant fathers.

Tanya Paul presents the findings of her study "Prevalence of Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms After Childbirth: Does Ethnicity Have an Impact?" The purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence of posttraumatic stress symptoms in mothers during the first 6 months after giving birth and to

determine whether ethnicity had an impact on the occurrence of such symptoms. This timely topic is extremely relevant as we continue to focus our attentions on the effects of traumatic birth. To highlight this topic, we are thrilled that Cheryl Beck, DNSc, CNM, FAAN, a renowned expert on postpartum mood and anxiety disorders, will be one of the plenary session speakers at the Lamaze International 2008 Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

In this issue of JPE, Joyce Wright discusses the findings from her qualitative study, "Prenatal and Postnatal Diagnosis of Infant Disability: Breaking the News to Mothers." She describes how the birth of an infant with a disability is often perceived as the loss of a "perfect" baby and is typically an unanticipated event for the mother and family. Dr. Wright proposes strategies that perinatal educators can incorporate in their teaching to facilitate a positive outcome for the mother and to promote optimal infant bonding.

Continuing on the theme of new mother/baby interaction, Margaret Barnes and her co-authors from Australia present findings from their study, "Learning About Baby: What New Mothers Would Like to Know." This study, part of a larger research project to evaluate a new model of care for first-time mothers in a community health-care setting, aimed to identify the preparation and information needs of first-time mothers. Findings suggest that current approaches to care and education may not meet the needs of first-time mothers. Different approaches are suggested to enhance women's maternal competence during the first few months of becoming a new mother.

Amber Pewitt informs readers of the results of her qualitative descriptive pilot study, "The Experience of Perinatal Care at a Birthing Center." The purpose of this study was to describe women's experiences of care and satisfaction at a freestanding birth center. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews of seven women who had given birth within 12 months of participant selection. Using qualitative content analysis, three themes emerged: (1) Empowerment, (2) Sense of Motherhood, and (3) Establishing and Strengthening Relationships. Pewitt discusses implications for practice, policy, and education.

We are also delighted and honored to have Shahnaz TorkZahrani, a midwife and a faculty member at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science and Health Services in Tehran, Iran, share

a commentary titled “Childbirth Education in Iran.” This thought-provoking piece describes how, despite many efforts to improve maternity care in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the nation’s childbirth care still faces a tremendous amount of unnecessary intervention and, consequently, a high rate of cesarean births. As a Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educator, TorkZahrani is able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Iran’s maternity-care system and childbirth education in light of evidence-based practice.

In this issue, Amy Romano and Henci Goer’s “Research Summaries” column summarizes four research studies relevant to normal birth. The topics of the studies summarized include the harms of screening for macrosomia late in pregnancy, the risk factors for and impact of postpartum pain in childbearing women, the effects of a breastfeeding approach called “biological nurturing” on reflexive behavior in newborns, and the effects of prenatal yoga on labor and birth outcomes.

And on a lighter note, in “Deb’s Last Laugh – I Presume You Understand,” Deb Gauldin explores

the humorous side of miscommunication and makes a case for why we should never presume anything.

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