

Children, Youth, and Families Signature Research Area Group Mini-conference on
The National Children's Study and Birth Cohort Research at Columbia

Participant Biographies

Session I: Introduction to the National Children's Study and Ancillary Studies

VIRGINIA RAUH, Speaker

Virginia Rauh, ScD, MSW, has been working in the field of perinatal epidemiology since 1982. Her expertise is in the area of low birth weight and preterm delivery, particularly with respect to socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority populations. She has been principal investigator on numerous major research projects, including a randomized intervention trial for low birth weight infants, a multi-site study of lifestyles in pregnancy, a study of developmental outcomes of children born to inner-city adolescent mothers, a multi-level analysis of the impact of Head Start on New York City school children, a study of the effects of air pollutants on pregnant women and their children, and a study of links between race, stressors, and preterm birth. Dr. Rauh serves as deputy director of the Center for Children's Environmental Health, where her work focuses on the adverse impact of exposure to air pollutants, including second hand smoke and pesticides; on pregnancy and child health; and the susceptibility of disadvantaged populations to environmental hazards. She is working with other Columbia faculty to study the effects of the World Trade Center disaster on pregnant women and newborns. She is primary instructor for the Child Health course within the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health. In addition, Dr. Rauh is an affiliated faculty member for the Robert Wood Johnson Health & Society Scholars Program, and is currently directing an initiative to integrate air quality and socio-demographic information in New York City.

LEONARDO TRASANDE, Speaker

Leonardo Trasande co-directs the Children's Environmental Health Center at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine (www.cehcenter.org), where he holds a joint appointment as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and the Department of Community and Preventive Medicine. Dr. Trasande serves on the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. His research interests span medicine and policy. He is best known for his analyses of the economic impact of environmental toxins on child health, and is embarking on a series of analyses that document the immediate health and economic consequences of childhood obesity. His analysis of the health and economic consequences of mercury pollution played a critical role in preventing the Clear Skies Act from becoming law, and provided a major foundation for the multistate lawsuit that overturned EPA's Clean Air Mercury Rule (which relaxed regulations on emissions from coal-fired power plants). Dr. Trasande is also a leading investigator in the *National Children's Study*, a longitudinal cohort study of 100,000 children that will identify the preventable and environmental factors that contribute to asthma, obesity and other chronic conditions in childhood.

Dr. Trasande earned a Master's degree in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and an M.D. from Harvard Medical School. He completed a pediatrics residency at Boston Children's Hospital, a Dyson Foundation Legislative Fellowship in the office of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, and a fellowship in environmental pediatrics at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. He has testified before the Senate's Environment and Public Works committee and Democratic Policy Committee. His work has been featured on the CNN documentary *Planet in Peril* and in *National Geographic*, and frequently appears on national media, including NBC's Today Show, ABC's Evening News and National Public Radio. Dr. Trasande is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and continues to practice clinically.

JOHN SANTELLI, Moderator

John Santelli, MD, MPH, is the Harriet and Robert H. Heilbrunn Clinical Professor of Population and Family Health and the Department Chair at the Mailman School. Dr. Santelli is a pediatrician and adolescent medicine specialist who recently joined the School of Public Health at Columbia University. Prior to coming to New York, he was the Chief of the Applied Sciences Branch in the Division of Reproductive Health at U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). He is also a senior consultant for the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a member of the Board of Directors of the Society for Adolescent Medicine, and the editorial board for the Journal of Adolescent Health. He has conducted research on adolescent sexual behaviors, programs to prevent STD/HIV/unintended pregnancy, school-based health centers, clinical preventive services, and research ethics. He has been a national leader in insuring that adolescents are appropriately included in health research and in opposing abstinence-only sexuality education.

Session 2: Other U.S. Birth Cohorts

JEANNE BROOKS-GUNN, Speaker

Jeanne Brooks-Gunn is the Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Child Development and Education at Teachers College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. She co-directs the National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College and the Institute for Child and Family Policy at Columbia University.

Dr. Brooks-Gunn's specialty is policy-oriented research focusing on family and community influences upon the development of children and youth. She also designs and evaluates interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being of children living in poverty and associated conditions. Her books on these topics include *Consequences of growing up poor* (1997); *Escape from poverty: What makes a difference for children?* (1995); *Adolescent mothers in later life* (1987); and *Neighborhood poverty (1997): Context and consequences for children*.

She also conducts research on transitional periods focusing on school, family and biological transitions in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. She is interested in the factors that contribute to positive and negative outcomes and changes in well-being over these years. Her books on these topics include, *He and she: How children develop their sex role identity* (1979); *Social cognition and the acquisition of self* (1979); *Girls at puberty: Biological and psychosocial perspectives* (1983); and *Conflict and cohesion in families: Causes and consequences* (1999). In addition, she is the author of over 500 published articles.

Dr. Brooks-Gunn has been the recipient of several awards; *Dina Feitelson Research Award* from the International Reading Association (2008); the Society for Research in Child Development's award for distinguished contributions to public policy for children (2005), she has been elected *Margaret Mead Fellow* by the American Academy of Political and Social Science (2004) and has received the *James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award* (2002) for outstanding contributions to the area of applied psychological research from the American Psychological Society. She was honored with the *Distinguished Contributions to Research in Public Policy Award* (2001) from the American Psychological Association and has also received the *John B. Hill Award* from the Society for Research on Adolescence for her life-time contribution to research on adolescence (1996).

STEPHANIE KASEN, Speaker

Dr. Stephanie Kasen is a Research Scientist in the Division of Epidemiology at New York State Psychiatric Institute, and Associate Clinical Professor of Medical Psychology in Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York. Dr. Kasen is Co-Principal Investigator of the Children in the Community (CIC) study, an ongoing longitudinal study of early child psychopathology and later adult consequences. First assessed in 1975 at a mean age of 5-years-old, that cohort currently is being assessed for the seventh time, at mean age 38. Dr. Kasen is involved in research on adult consequences of childhood depression and personality disorder in the CIC cohort, and stress and depression in aging women, all of whom are mothers of the CIC cohort. She also is Principal Investigator of the Suicide Transmission across Three Generations study, which is based on the CIC cohort, their parents, and their offspring.

Patricia Cohen, PI for Children in the Community Study

Dr. Patricia Cohen is a Research Scientist in the Division of Epidemiology at New York State Psychiatric Institute, and Professor of Epidemiology in Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York. Dr. Cohen is Principal Investigator of the Children in the Community Study (CIC). The CIC study has produced over 220 publications on the risks, course, and long-term consequences of childhood Axis I disorder and Axis II personality disorder. Dr. Cohen's current work involves the use of developmental trajectory analysis of repeated measures data to study continuity of childhood disorder over the early and middle adult years. She also is a recognized expert on statistical and design issues, and is a co-author of the Applied Multiple Regression/ Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences text.

WILLIAM P. FIFER, Speaker

Dr. Fifer is a Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University and a primary investigator in the Developmental Neuroscience Laboratory at New York State Psychiatric Institute, Columbia University. His research interests focus on fetal and neonatal behavioral, perceptual and autonomic nervous system development. Current investigations in his laboratory include studies of fetal, newborn and premature infant neurobehavioral responses to sensory stimulation, infant sleep physiology, and the effects of in utero experience on later neurodevelopment.

He and his colleagues are currently involved in large fetal/infant cohort studies New York City, North and South Dakota, and Cape Town, South Africa.

He also has active collaborations within the Departments of Psychiatry, Obstetrics, Pediatrics, Behavioral Medicine at Columbia and the Indian Health Service focusing on the effects of maternal anxiety, depression and alcohol use during pregnancy on the developing fetus, the relationship between diet and sleep in premature infants, development of autonomic control, and assessment of risk for neurological disorders including Sudden Infant Death and Autism.

IRWIN GARFINKEL, Moderator

Irwin Garfinkel is the Mitchell I. Ginsberg Professor of Contemporary Urban Problems and co-director of the [Columbia Population Research Center \(CPRC\)](#). He has authored or co-authored over 150 scientific articles and eleven books on poverty, income transfers, program evaluation, and child support. His research on child support influenced legislation in the state of Wisconsin, among other states, the U.S. Congress, Great Britain, Australia, and Sweden. He is currently the co-principal investigator of the [Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study](#) and has just completed a book entitled *The American Welfare State: Laggard or Leader?*

Session 3: International Birth Cohort Studies

EZRA SUSSER, Speaker

Dr. Susser is Professor of Epidemiology, at the Mailman School of Public Health and Professor of Psychiatry at the college of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University and The New York State Psychiatric Institute. Much of Dr. Susser's early work focused on the course of schizophrenia and especially on social outcomes. In his early research career he was involved in follow-up studies of psychoses in the United States (Suffolk County Mental Health Project) and across the globe (WHO International Study of Schizophrenia). He also conducted studies of homelessness and its prevention among patients with schizophrenia in the United States. This work included the development and testing of the initial version of Critical Time Intervention (CTI) for prevention of recurrent homelessness (Dan Herman has led the subsequent work on CTI).

His recent research has been primarily on the epidemiology of mental disorders, and on examining the role of early life experience in health and disease throughout the life course. He heads the Imprints Center for Genetic and Environmental Lifecourse Studies, which fosters collaborative research and intellectual exchange among investigators studying developmental origins in birth cohorts across the globe. As one example, the findings from a series of studies have suggested that exposure to famine in early gestation is associated with increased schizophrenia among offspring. Dr. Susser is Associate Editor of the International Journal of Epidemiology, and Former Chair of the Department of Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health (1999-2008). He received his M.D. and Dr. Ph. at Columbia University.

ALAN BROWN, Speaker

Dr. Alan Brown is Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry and Clinical Epidemiology in the Department of Psychiatry of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York State Psychiatric Institute and the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University. He is Director of the Unit in Birth Cohort Studies in the Division of Epidemiology in the New York State Psychiatric Institute. He received his B.A. from Johns Hopkins University, his M.D. from Jefferson Medical College, and completed adult residency training in psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. He then completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in the schizophrenia research program in the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia. He then received a master's degree in public health from the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.

Dr. Brown's major areas of research are on the influence of in utero and other early developmental precursors on the risk of major psychopathology, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and autism. He is also actively investigating the relationship between early developmental precursors and structural and functional brain anomalies in schizophrenia. The risk factors that he has investigated have included in utero exposure to infection, micronutrient deficiency, and hormonal exposures. He has conducted birth cohort research in the USA and is leading an international collaborative birth cohort study.

Dr. Brown is the recipient of several awards including the A.E. Bennett Research Award from the Society of Biological Psychiatry. He has been principal investigator on many grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, and has also been

funded by the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression (NARSAD) and the Stanley Foundation. He has authored over 80 research publications. He is on the editorial boards of Schizophrenia Bulletin and other major journals, has been a member of several NIH study sections, and is a grant reviewer for a number of international foundations. He is a member of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology and other major professional societies.

DEBBIE LAWLOR, Speaker

Dr. Lawlor is Professor of Epidemiology and Head of Division of Epidemiology in the Department of Social Medicine at the University of Bristol. She also serves as the Deputy Director of MRC Centre for Causal Analyses in Translational Research. Dr. Lawlor's research is underpinned by her interest in understanding how biological (including genetic), social and environmental exposures from across the life course affect the risk of chronic disease in adulthood and how, therefore, appropriate prevention of these conditions can be achieved. She is interested in developing methods for improving causal inference in epidemiology. To this end much of her recent research has used genetic variants as instrumental variables for determining the causal effect of non-genetic risk factors on disease traits and clinical outcomes. She has also developed methods for and used family based studies to examine causal mechanisms in life course epidemiology.

JANET CURRIE, Moderator

Dr. Currie is a Professor of Economics and Chair of the Department of Economics at Columbia University. She is a Fellow of the Society of Labor Economists, a Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, an affiliate of the University of Michigan's National Poverty Center, and an affiliate of IZA in Bonn. She is on the advisory board of the National Children's Study and on the editorial board of the Quarterly Journal of Economics.

For the past decade, her research has focused on evaluating programs aimed at poor children and families. She has written about early intervention programs, programs to expand health insurance and improve health care, public housing, and food and nutrition programs. Much of this research is summarized in *The Invisible Safety Net: Protecting the Nation's Poor Children and Families* (Princeton University Press, 2006). Currently, she is interested in social determinants of child health, and in the relationship between socioeconomic status and health.

Working Lunch

JANE WALDFOGEL, Moderator

Dr. Waldfogel is a Professor of Social Work and Public Affairs at Columbia University School of Social Work. She is also a research associate at the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the London School of Economics.

Her current research includes a five-year NICHD-funded study of work-family policies and child and family well-being. The focus of this study is how public policies affect parental employment and care arrangements for children, and how these, in turn, affect outcomes for children, youth, and families. Through this project, Waldfogel and collaborators are using data from the CPS to trace the effects of public policies on parental employment decisions in the months surrounding a birth. They are also using data from the ECLS-B (and the U.K. counterpart, the Millennium Cohort Study) to examine paternity leave-taking and its impact on father involvement. Waldfogel is also a co-investigator on the NICHD-funded Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study. She was a member of the team that designed and implemented the in-home study of child abuse and neglect, as well as the in-home assessment of children. Her work with the Fragile Families data to date includes studies of income and child development, and the effects of parental employment on child cognition and behavior. She is currently using Fragile Families data from birth to age 5 to analyze the predictors of sub-standard parenting and of involvement with child protective services. In 2006, she published What Children Need (Harvard University Press).