

Fall, 2015



## **Editors' Note**

This issue of THE PERIODICAL is in a somewhat different format from previous ones. We've learned that when it is sent out as an attachment to an email some systems block or send it to a spam folder or folks are less likely to open it, so for now we're using this long email form. We invite your responses to either of us with suggestions and items for the next issue which has a submission deadline of December 15, 2015.

There's a lot going on in the world of SMCR members and we're glad to share the news.

Go with the flow!

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# President's Report

#SMCR2015: 3 Heady Days in June

It was our biggest, most global conference yet!

In Boston, we gathered more than 200 researchers, teachers, students, social entrepreneurs, artists, activists, and health care providers from 26 countries on six continents to renew and extend our commitments to improving menstrual health worldwide.

Keynoters Loretta Ross and Tomi-Ann Roberts and three plenaries animated by spirited artists, dedicated scholars and innovative advocates joined with the voices of more than 70 presenters in concurrent sessions. Transforming the Suffolk University Law School into a multi-site art gallery (pieces are still on view at <http://www.wideningthecycle.com/>), a comedy club, performance space and a marketplace, we displayed innovation, traded ideas and seeded collaborations.

No one present can deny the endless ways we Made Menstruation Matter!

Feedback from attendees demonstrates that SMCR 2015 was a meaningful and unique experience and its impacts promise to endure. But don't take my word for it. Below, I've captured a few excerpts to our post-event evaluation question: "What did you value most about the conference?"

*...The SMCR continues to be on the most unique, engaging and exciting conferences that I attend. I think it is a wonderful example of interdisciplinarity at its best.*

*...excellent keynotes and main sessions, [and] opportunities for customizing your experience*

*...the amazing mixture of very high quality offerings at every minute throughout the entire conference*

*...the diversity of the participants, both in cultural backgrounds from around the world, as well as disciplines. The art show was a very impressive addition.*

*...the coming together of a multi-diverse group of menstrual cycle researchers, advocates, artists and enthusiasts created a synergy that affirmed for me the importance of SMCR as a focal point for menstrual cycle advocacy. Where would all these different areas of approach to menstrual cycle issues gather if not at a SMCR conference?*

No doubt, we owe much of our success to our fruitful partnership with The Center for Women's Health and Human Rights [CWHHR] at Suffolk University, founded and directed by Amy Agigian. Our close collaboration with CWHHR—together with the hard work of our fabulous conference team-- enabled us to reach a wider and richer diversity of individuals and organizations who made the 'menstrual connection.'

We will meet again in Atlanta in 2017. Conference Chair Evelina Sterling is gearing up to assemble a team, co sponsors and a preliminary program. Want to help her out? Reach out

to [evelinaws@yahoo.com](mailto:evelinaws@yahoo.com). Get ready Atlanta: we shall paint the town RED!

Moving forward, I issue a challenge to all SMCR members who attended the conference. Let's stoke the fires we lit in Boston. There's lots going and more on the horizon. For example....

Support our journal *Women's Reproductive Health* (directed by founding editor, Joan C. Chrisler).

Submit! Review! Cite!

Contribute to our blog *re:Cycling*. Revitalized with monthly themes and fresh content (now edited by Laura Wershler and advised by a newly formed Editorial Board).

Post! Comment! Like! Share!

And promote the Robin Danielson Act. Let's move this bill through the halls of Congress.

Get informed! Talk it up! Contact your legislators!

Let's pledge to stay connected and keep the energy we generated in Boston alive. I will see you on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MenstruationResearch>, on Twitter <https://twitter.com/SMCRtweetsand>, on the blog <http://menstruationresearch.org/blog/> and on our SMCR members email list.

In solidarity,

Chris Bobel

## SMCR Board Elections

The SMCR will hold its board election in October 2015. There are six candidates, nominated at the SMCR Business Meeting, June 6th, 2015, in Boston, running to fill four positions on the board.

The election will take place electronically via Ballot Bin. In early October members will receive the link to vote via email. The voting site will provide bios of the six candidates for reference. It is requested that you take the time to vote as soon as you receive the link. SMCR bylaws set as the quorum for a board election 50 percent of the membership. **This means 50 percent of members in good standing must vote before the election can be declared complete.**

The election results will be announced two weeks after the election begins if 50 percent of members have voted by that date. If 50 percent do not vote within two weeks, the election will continue until the quorum is reached. **If you receive a reminder to vote, please do so at your earliest convenience.**

### Candidate Bios:

Mindy J. Erchull, Ph.D. is a social psychologist working as an associate professor of psychological

science at the University of Mary Washington in Virginia. She has been an SMCR member since 1999 when she attended the Tucson conference to present her undergraduate thesis about educational booklets about menarche. Her involvement in menstrual cycle research continued in graduate school and currently serves as a sideline to her primary research topics of the objectification and sexualization of women. Lately much of her research has focused on men's knowledge of and attitudes about the menstrual cycle. In 2009, she was elected to serve on the SMCR board, and in the past 6 years has served the society in a number of ways. She was program co-chair for the Pittsburg conference, spent 2 years as associate editor of our blog, and served as membership coordinator for the last 2 years. She also coordinated awards and scholarships for the Boston conference. She is running for a second term on the board as she wants to continue to offer her energy to the society. If re-elected, she looks forward to continued service.

Arpan Yagnik is an Assistant Professor of Advertising at Penn State University in Erie. He received his Ph.D. from Bowling Green State University in Health and Development Communication with focus on Menstruation. Arpan has been an advocate for menstrual health since 2009 and has contributed in uplifting the menstrual health of women by engaging in scholarly work through his dissertation and published peer reviewed journal articles. He also initiated "Keep it Flowing!" a local campaign in his university which successfully provided free menstrual hygiene and sanitary products to women in need in the Wood county and near by county areas within North-West Ohio. Arpan's speciality is advocacy communication and fund-raising. For the Society of Menstrual Cycle and Research, he wishes to utilize his strengths in gathering more financial resources for the society and providing it with a strong voice and agency as a leading stakeholder in the empowerment of menstrual health and its related issues through his advocacy communication skills.

Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris, PhD, MPH, is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at The College of New Jersey. Her specialties include attitudes toward menstruation, menstrual suppression, sexual risk, health disparities, and public health. She is the Book/Media Review Editor of SMCR's journal Women's Reproductive Health. As a member of the board, Jessica hopes to further engage early career professionals and students with the organization.

Jax J. Gonzalez is a menstrual activist and Masters Candidate in Sociology and Women's, Gender & Sexuality studies at Brandeis University. Her research surrounds queering menstruation and the potential roles menstrual and sexual subjectivities play in the classroom during puberty curricula in the Elementary setting, or how educators manage "teaching the taboo." As a board member, she hopes to be both a liaison for student SMCR members and Activist SMCR members, in order to provide cohesion for these facets of our interdisciplinary group. With her experience working directly with Chris Bobel for the 2015 conference on logistics, design and donations, she can provide continuity and support for future SMCR conferences and events.

Evelina Weidman Sterling is currently a Lecturer of Sociology at Kennesaw State University, located just outside Atlanta, Georgia. Evelina has 25 years of experience working as a public health educator and researcher specializing in a variety of reproductive and women's health issues. She is the co-author of several consumer health books focusing on fertility-related issues, including Living with PCOS, Before Your Time: Living Well with Early Menopause, and Having Your Baby through Egg Donation. Through her work with the Southern Research and Evaluation Institute, she has also helped dozens of non-profit organizations, universities, and government agencies with all aspects of program development,

implementation and evaluation.

Herdís Sveinsdóttir is a Professor of Nursing at the University of Iceland and Director of Research and Development of Nursing Care of Surgical Patients at the National University Hospital. She chairs the Equal rights committee at the University of Iceland. She is the former president of the Icelandic Nurses' Association and chair of the Workgroup of European Nurse Researchers. Her research interest lies in menstrual cycle health, care of surgical patients and occupational health.

## **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 in 2016 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.

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

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.

## **re:Cycling Blog Update from Laura Wershler, Editor-in-Chief**

As the new editor-in-chief of the blog, I'm excited to be working with a committed editorial board that includes fellow SMCR members Saniya Lee Ghanoui, Chris Hitchcock, Lisa Leger, David Linton, Jerilynn Prior, Evelina Sterling and Peggy Stubbs.

### **What's new at the blog?**

The editorial committee met in July to decide on key principles for the operation of the blog and to discuss editorial content for the next 10 months. One of our goals is to engage more SMCR members as blog

contributors. If you are interested in writing for the blog, please take a look at the editorial calendar below to see to which subject area you might want to contribute. Another major goal is to increase both readership and comment numbers for the blog. We ask members to read, comment and share **re: Cycling** posts with their social media communities.

### Recent Content

Blog readers will know that in August we revisited the Boston conference with posts that included menstrual poetry performed at the Open Mic event, and videos of plenary sessions provided to SMCR courtesy of Robert Lewis. If you weren't at the conference or missed some of the plenary sessions you can find the YouTube links to these sessions, including the Menstrual Poetry Open Mic, on the blog.

In September, **re: Cycling** launched its new monthly-themed content with a series of posts about **menarche**. The post line-up for the month includes a range of perspectives and approaches to discussing the onset of menstruation. Social media buzz has generated a fair number of comments to date, mostly from the general public. I urge SMCR members to become regular commenters to the blog. Share your opinions and expertise!

### So what's upcoming for the blog?

Check out the editorial calendar as planned to date and let me know if you have something to say about any of these topics. Or is there another topic you think we should blog about? The calendar is open to suggestion. Keep in mind that any perspective—research, health-related, activism, opinion, experiential, educational—can be incorporated into any of these themes.

September	Menarche
October	Political & Social Activism
November	Chronic Disease and the Menstrual Cycle
December	Humor and Celebrations
January	Environmental Health
February	Media Representations
March	Endometriosis
April	Peri- and Early Menopause
May	Ovulation
June	Not yet determined

If you have any questions, concerns or interest in writing for the blog please email me at [lwershler@gmail.com](mailto:lwershler@gmail.com).

## Membership News

As those who attended either the SMCR conference in Boston or the Menstrual Hygiene Day evening event in New York city in May already know, Rosie Sheba and a team of intrepid bicyclists completed their cross-country adventure on behalf of menstrual education and sustainable product use to much fanfare

and celebration. Now, Rosie has published a book about the Sustainable Cycles ride and the conference. It is available on [Kindle](#). It's an outstanding example of menstrual activism.

Since the SMCR conference in Boston David Linton has been engaged in menstrual education and research by presenting conference papers at the Early Book Society in Oxford, England about the visual representation of menstrual stories in the Bible and at the Fragile Subjects conference in Turku, Finland about the representation of menarche in film and television. Currently he is helping to organize posting for re:Cycling during October's Menstrual Activism month and working with Saniya Lee Ghanoui in assembling the SMCR newsletter.

#### THE "DE-TOX & DE-TAX THE PERIOD" CAMPAIGN MOVES FORWARD

As part of the menstrual activism component of SMCR endeavors, the Society is engaged in a two pronged campaign: 1) to gain passage of the Robin Danielson Act by the US Congress to require testing and regulation of the content of menstrual hygiene products; 2) to work at various state, local and national levels to eliminate sales tax levies on menstrual products. October has been designated as the targeted month for letter writing and petition circulation so separate information will be distributed to rally member participation in these two efforts. Get ready to sign and write!!

*The Wrong Prescription for Women: How Medicine and Media Create a "Need" for Treatments, Drugs, and Surgery* (Praeger, 2015) is a new book edited by Maureen McHugh and Joan Chrisler. A number of SMCR members contributed chapters to the book. Other members might like to read Maureen and Joan on the medicalization of women's bodies and everyday lives; Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris on menstrual suppression; Joan and Jenny Gorman on PMS and PMDD; Heather Dillaway on menopause; Jane Ussher and Janette Perz on menopause and sexuality; Leonore Tiefer on sexual "problems"; Mindy Erchull on the thin ideal; Maureen on the medical management of fat women; and a foreword by Paula Caplan. Other chapters address weight-loss drugs, cosmetic surgery, depression, and the medicalization of grief.

After presenting at the SMCR conference in June, Saniya Lee Ghanoui traveled to Turku, Finland to present a paper on children and menstrual education films. She also spent the summer in Sweden researching early sex and menstrual hygiene films in Scandinavia. She is currently writing a paper on sex education films in public schools.

## New & Noteworthy from Beauty in Blood

(Jen Lewis)

### 2015 Exhibitions

- *FOCUS*, Spark Gallery (Denver, CO)
- *& Perception*, Aurora Cultural Arts District Gallery (Aurora, CO)
- *Our Bodies Our Blood*, Plan B Gallery (Halifax, Nova Scotia)
- Lunette Cup Presents: *Menstrual Hygiene Day*, Kulttuuritalo Telakka (Tampere, Finland)
- Feminist Art Conference Presents: *Looking Forward Looking Back*, OCAD University (Toronto, Ontario)
- *Widening the Cycle: A Menstrual Cycle & Reproductive Justice Art Show*, 21<sup>st</sup> Biennial Conference Society for Menstrual Cycle Research (Boston, MA)

### Media Mentions

Robb, Alice. (2015) Artist Finds 'Beauty in Blood' with New Project Featuring Her Own Menstrual Blood. **Women in the World / New York Times**. May 12.

<http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2015/05/12/artist-finds-beauty-in-blood-with-new-project-featuring-her-own-menstrual-blood/>

McNeal, Stephanie. (2015) This Woman Is Using Her Own Period Blood to Create Beautiful Photographs. **Buzzfeed**. May 10. <http://www.buzzfeed.com/stephaniemcneal/this-artist-is-using-period-blood-to-create-beautiful-photog#.xkpgZGP1G>

Moore, Lane. (2015) These Gorgeous Photos Will Change the Way You See Your Period Forever [NSFW]. **Cosmopolitan Magazine Blog**. May 7. <http://www.cosmopolitan.com/sex-love/news/a40138/these-gorgeous-photos-will-change-the-way-you-see-your-period-forever-nsfw/>

Frank, Priscilla. (2015) Artist Explores the Unexpected Beauty of Menstrual Blood Using Macrophotography. **Huffington Post**. May 5.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/05/jen-lewis-beauty-in-blood\\_n\\_7205908.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=arts](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/05/jen-lewis-beauty-in-blood_n_7205908.html?utm_hp_ref=arts)

Revisit *Widening the Cycle*:

Video from the Artist Plenary Session

[https://youtu.be/xiY\\_fIPvgnk](https://youtu.be/xiY_fIPvgnk)

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#### SMCR MENSTRUAL RITUAL - THE PASSING OF THE GOLDEN TAMPON

Despite the reservations many SMCR members have about its use, there is probably no other object that is more associated with menstruation than the tampon. So some years ago the SMCR created its own ritual to symbolize the work that SMCR leaders engage in: the passing of the golden tampon. At the June gathering in Boston the event was enacted when Ingrid Johnston-Robledo, who had completed her two-year term as President, passed the object to her successor, Chris Bobel.

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