President's Message:
Reforming Healthcare: Medical Technologies & Beyond

By Shirley Hill
SWS President

I really didn’t want to take my 89-year old mother-in-law to get an MRI. Her doctor had ordered and scheduled it for her, but it wasn’t clear why she needed it. It might have been explained to my mother-in-law, but her memory and ability to manage her own affairs have declined significantly over the past few years. All she knew was that she was feeling fine and hadn’t told the doctor otherwise. The doctor told me that an x-ray had revealed a “shadow” near her brain and they wanted to take a closer look. My mother-in-law never questioned the need for an MRI: Like many in her generation, she believes in following “doctor’s orders.” I’ve become more involved in her care over the past year, but was hesitant to try to talk her out of this—wasn’t that tantamount to saying that, since she was old, her health wasn’t important? So I took her to get the MRI and later to get the results from the doctor, who said “everything looked okay.” Then, her insurance company denied coverage for the MRI, claiming that the need for it hadn’t been adequately explained. The hospital has responded by sending us a bill for more than $7000. Why are MRIs being ordered for asymptomatic elderly people? Shouldn’t health care providers make sure such procedures are covered by insurance before ordering them? Or, if there is doubt, let the patient know how much they’ll be billed for? My mother-in-law may be forgetful and respectful of doctors’ orders but, given a choice, I am sure she would have declined the offer of an MRI had she been told it would cost her $7000, much more than she can pay from her meager pension. But the only choice she was given was to follow doctors orders, or not.

The proliferation of medical technologies used to detect and treat illnesses is a major factor in the rising cost of health care. The availability of medical technologies results in what medical sociologists call the “technological imperative”: the idea that medical technologies must be used, regardless of the circumstances. Getting high-tech care is often seen as getting the best care available, but in reality medical technologies are a double-edged sword: They can save lives and lower medical costs by detecting and treating illnesses in their early stages and, especially in a profit-driven system, result in questionable diagnoses and needless medical interventions, extend life without healing sickness or alleviating suffering, and produce staggering health care costs. I think an annual medical check-up is a good thing (so get one!), as is preventive care. But the latter is usually defined in terms of health behaviors —e.g., managing stress, eating right, exercising—and seen as an individual responsibility. Preventive care in the medical system often means using detection technologies, followed by surgeries, drug therapies, and more technologies. Medical technologies that detect illness are often shamelessly promoted with scare tactics used to transform people into patients. A full-page ad has appeared in my local newspaper for sometime now, offering a set of heart and stroke detection tests at a discounted price (normally $229—now just $195!) administered in hotels throughout the city. The ad suggests giving gift certificates for these medical tests to your loved ones and includes testimonials from people whose test results led them to have immediate “life-saving” surgery. Yes, it’s hard to question the value of knowing that you have high cholesterol or a partially blocked artery, but whether a heart attack, stroke, or death was imminent or surgery was the best solution is a different matter.

Since women are the primary consumers of medical care and the medicalization of their illnesses has always been a major issue, they stand a greater chance of being harmed by useless medical tests and technologies. Medical tests determine whether the quantity of blood loss during a menstruation constitutes menorrhagia or if labor had lasted long enough to warrant a C-Section. Using “gene chips”—a new technology that costs about $1600—doctors are able to detect ever-more subtle abnormalities in fetuses, fostering more prenatal interventions, abortions, and emotional anxiety. Columnist Sharon Begley has been an outspoken critic of the ever-expanding use of technologies that are of questionable value. She reported that in 2004, about ten million women lacking a cervix were given Pap tests—tests used to detect cervical cancer (Newsweek, March 9, 2009). Medical advice on age and frequency at which women should get mammograms is in a constant state of flux, with less attention paid to high rates of inaccurate results. Medical technologies rarely address our most common health problems, like the high rate of infant mortality, or the major problems facing the health care system—e.g., the lack of access to health care by the uninsured, the overdose of emergency rooms, the high cost of health insurance, or the billions of dollars scammed from Medicare and Medicaid by health care providers.

But reform is in the air, and even the private sector of the health care system is taking note. The Obama Administration has made health care reform its top legislative goal; it defines reform mostly as building on the current system of private insurance, while broadening coverage, reducing health insurance premiums, and making sure people who are sick are not denied health care. Private sector medical equipment groups, drug companies, and hospitals have pledged to support the effort by cutting the growth of health care costs. The health care reform package, which is to be sent to Congress by the end of July, also includes more than a billion dollars for evidence-based medicine—or studying the comparative effectiveness of competing treatments for things such as back pain and prostate cancer. Some drug companies (e.g., Merck) have already agreed to base the price of their therapies on the actual improvements in the health of patients. It’s interesting, though, that evidence-based medicine has met with resistance from several entities, including some doctors, who have clung to the virtues of science in medicine for more than a century. Many now claim that basing medical care on comparative studies of what works best will lead to inadequate treatment, rationing health care, and even—socialized medicine.

Our major policy initiative of SWS, universal access to health care, is right on target with the momentum for health care reform. We recently sponsored a Feminist White Paper competition on health care, and the award winning paper is now posted on our website, along with a Wiki that allows for updates and wider participation. Do peruse these resources to promote knowledge and activism: The time for health care reform is NOW.
On the job market?
Preparing an article for publication?
Seeking Strategies to balance work and family?
Going up for promotion?
Considering a job outside of academia?

Perhaps You Need A Mentor
THE SWS PROFESSIONAL NEEDS MENTORING PROGRAM

For more information, contact Carolyn Corrado
(cc9090@albany.edu)
or visit our website: http://socwomen.org/page.php?ss=6

THANK YOU TO SWS MEMBERS
By Carolyn Corrado

On behalf of the Career Development Committee, as the Professional Needs Mentor Coordinator, I’d like to extend my sincere thanks to the following SWSers for serving as mentors for the Professional Needs Mentoring Program during the 2008-2009 academic year:

Denise Bielby
Lara Foley
Alice Fothergill
Rita Gallin
Amy Hubbard
Neal King
Tracy Ore

Kris Paap
Jo Reger
Marybeth Stalp
Barbara Trepagnier
Kay Valentine
Anne Vittoria
Cathy Zimmer
Gender Transitions:
Strides Toward Greater Equality

By Shirley Hill
SWS President

We are planning a great meeting for you at the San Francisco Hilton, August 7-10. Our program includes several sessions and workshops sponsored/co-sponsored by SWS, an Awards Banquet at the City Club, and a session with our Feminist Lecturer, Paula England. We are especially honored to have Paula, Professor of Sociology at Stanford University and an affiliate of the Clayman Institute for Gender Research, as our lecturer, as her contributions to gender studies are immense. A pioneer in the field, she has studied gender inequality since beginning her dissertation in 1974, and her work has often focused on its impact in labor markets and families. Paula has published numerous articles and edited and co-edited several books on gender and families, including a recent co-edited (with Kathryn Edin) book entitled Unmarried Couples with Children (Russell Sage, 2007). Her work has garnered many honors and awards, including ASA’s Jessie Bernard Award for “career contributions to scholarship on gender,” which she won in 1999. I especially recall this award because I chaired the Award committee the year Paula won. There was no doubt her scholarly work qualified her for this award, but we thought it a little odd to honor the “career achievements” of someone who was so young and had not reached “mid-career” stage. True to our expectations, the prodigious scholarship that earned her that award ten years ago has expanded over the years. Paula continues to make significant contributions to gender studies, exploring the persistence and consequences of gender inequality. She points out that when she first began her research she assumed that most aspects of gender inequality would trend toward equality over time, even if at a slower pace than most feminists would like. But as time has gone on, she has realized that change has been quite uneven, with some things changing a lot more than others, and some equalizing trends being reversed. Thus, Paula has decided to use the SWS Feminist Lecture as an occasion to ponder why gender trends behave as they do. The title of her talk is “Gender Inequality: The Trends and What’s Behind Them.” She warns that she doesn’t have all the answers, but is anticipating an interactive session with lots of questions and comments.

Our program begins on Friday, August 7 with a session entitled “Sex and the City: Sex Workers and the Unionization of Their Development Committees are co-sponsoring a session entitled “Professionalizing: What It Means to be a Student in SWS?” and a session entitled “Navigating the Non-Academic Job Market.” Complete descriptions of these sessions can be found on the SWS website. For those interested in renewing their teaching energy and innovation, Kay Valentine and Kris DeWelde will facilitate a session entitled “All Teach Credit? A Workshop on Teaching Challenges and Coping Strategies,” where they will share their research on the concerns and frustrations of professors who are “teach out.” One way to energize the teaching experience is through combining service learning and research, and Heather Laube will share a film she co-produced with her students on the experiences of women who graduated from the University of Michigan-Flint.

One of the highlights of the summer meeting is the Awards Banquet, which will be held on August 8 at the City Club (http://www.cityclubsf.com/event_services.html). Finding a banquet time that didn’t compete with another major ASA/SSSP event was impossible, especially since there were only three nights to choose from. But the one thing we absolutely could not conflict with was the celebration of Carla Howery’s life, which will be held on Sunday (August 9) from 8 until 10. The loss of Carla has been tough, but her contributions to ASA, SWS, and her community are part of a legacy that will live on forever.

Early registration for the meeting ends July 28 and is only $10 for regular members and $5 for student members http://www.socwomen.org/meetings.php. I want to thank Jessica Holden Sherwood and the Executive office for all their help in putting this program together, the Executive Council for their advice, and all the wonderful committee chairs and members for facilitating sessions. See you in San Francisco!
SWS 2009 NOMINATIONS CALL

The Nominations Committee wants you to send us names of nominees to serve as our 2010 Officers, Standing Committee Chairs, and Committee Members. A brief description of each post and terms of service are listed below. Self-Nominations are welcome.

If you want to recommend someone, please ask them if they would be willing to be considered for the position. Make it clear that you are only suggesting them to the Nominations Committee for their consideration, and that the Committee has the responsibility of making the actual nominations and producing a diverse and balanced slate of candidates. There should be no assumption that the person you suggest will actually be nominated unless and until they hear from the Nominations Committee itself. Please e-mail us about the person’s willingness to serve and your thoughts about their fit with the duties of the position by June 30, 2009.

OFFICERS

President(-Elect) (2010-2013): This officer serves a three-year term as President-Elect, President, and Past President. The President Elect organizes the Winter and Summer Meetings to be held in the following year, appoints any Winter or Summer Meeting Committees needed, on behalf of the organization, signs any contracts that fall within the approved budget for these meetings, and provides appropriate advance information to members and others about the nature and location of these meetings. The President-Elect will also prepare to assume the Presidency after one year, and perform such other duties as may be determined by the Council. The Past President serves as Chair of the Nominations Committee and Scholarship and Human Rights Committee.

Secretary (2010-2012): The Secretary records, reports, and distributes minutes of the Council and general membership meetings, providing these in a timely fashion to the Newsletter Editor; is responsible for collecting, safekeeping & distribution of SWS documents, reports and correspondence; collaborates with the other officers in drawing up agendas for Council and membership meetings; and serves on the Nominations and Membership Committees.

(Deputy) Treasurer (2010-2014): The Deputy Treasurer serves for two years assisting the Treasurer in all activities pertaining to that office, prepares to assume the responsibilities of that office in succession, serves on the Executive Office and Budget Committee and performs such other duties as may be determined by the Council. In the following two years, the Deputy Treasurer becomes the Treasurer. The Treasurer prepares the budget, oversees long and short-term investments, and provides general oversight to the operations of the Executive Office. The Treasurer serves as Chair of the Executive Office and Budget Committee and member of the Publications Committee; and has other extensive duties.

Student Representative (2010-2011): Serves as chair of the Student Concerns Committee and represents the interests of undergraduate and graduate student members of SWS on the Council for the one-year term of office.
SWS COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS

All committee chairs are expected to facilitate committee meetings at the summer and winter meetings, and to prepare a report for the Business Meetings and publication in Network news.

Awards Committee Chair (2010-2012):
The Chair of this committee maintains SWS awards procedures and oversees its several subcommittees, each of which selects the winner of a specific SWS award.

Discrimination Committee Chair (2010-2012):
The Chair of the SWS Discrimination Committee accepts requests for assistance from members who believe they have been the victims of discrimination at their institutions of employment. The Chair distributes requests for assistance to members of the committee for their review and comments. Requests for additional information may be made by the committee members. Requests that are believed to have merit result in a letter on behalf of the committee in support of the complainant that is forwarded to the appropriate party at the complainant's institution.

International Committee Chair (2010-2012):
The Chair is responsible for coordinating the three aspects of the committee's work: SWS representation at UN meetings, collaborative work with 10 women's research centers around the world, and liaison with ISA, the World Social Forum and other international meetings and events.

Sister to Sister Committee Co-Chair (2010-2012):
The Sister to Sister committee has co-chairs serving staggered two-year terms. The committee works to build relationships across race/ethnic lines for women within SWS and the academy. It also administers the Women of Color Dissertation Scholarship.

Awards Committee Member (2010-2012): Members of this committee assist with the formation and work of each award subcommittee.

Career Development Committee Member (2010-2012): The Career Development committee implements activities that assist SWS members in professional development. Committee members work on such projects as the Professional Needs Mentoring Program and the monthly Q&A advice column "Hey Jane."

(2) Membership Committee Members (2010-2012): This committee works on recruiting and retaining members, as well as other issues related to membership.

(2) Nominations Committee Members (2010-2012): Along with the Committee Chair, who is the Past President of SWS, this committee handles the annual nominations process for elected positions in SWS.

(2) Publications Committee Members (2010-2012): The Publications Committee is charged with oversight of all SWS Publications (Gender & Society, Network news, Fact Sheets, etc.), for everything from budgets to staffing to distribution. The committee assists with contract renegotiation when applicable. The Co-Chairs of the Publications Committee are elected from among its members for staggered two-year terms.

Nominations Committee Members: Mimi Schippers, Patricia Richards, Gail Wallace, Cathy Zimmer, and Joey Sprague (Chair). Contact Joey at jsprague@ku.edu.
"Intense, fulfilling, exciting, multilayered learning experience" - that was Daniela Jauk's impression of the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York this March. SWS was represented by a substantial delegation of sixteen people, including International Committee Chair Pat Ould, UN representatives Susan Lee and Sarah Swider, Helen Raisz, University of Akron SWS president Daniela Jauk, and ten Akron undergraduates, Ifechi Anonyuou, Terry Bauer, Bethany Bercheck, Lauren Bylene, Meredith Clark, Valerie Cosner, Hannah Furnas, Igor Ljevaja, Lindsay Newton, and Edward Wristen. A Taiwanese SWS member, Shang-Luan Yan, also attended. For all of us, it was a rich and vivid experience of the international women's movement face to face with the member states of the United Nations.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a global policy-making body charged with gender equality and the advancement of women. It was established in 1946, early in the history of the United Nations. Forty-five UN member states sit on the Commission and meet annually to negotiate global normative standards for gender equality. Each session produces an outcome document, the Agreed Conclusions, which contributes to a growing global consciousness concerning gender. While not legally binding on UN member states, the Agreed Conclusions nonetheless set the parameters of expectations. Member states lose prestige when they violate standards they have officially agreed to. The language of the documents is therefore contested by member states and each Commission session is devoted to negotiating the wording of the Agreed Conclusions. The Commission also receives official reports and serves as a forum for raising emerging gender issues.

From its inception, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have participated in setting global norms by attending Commission sessions as observers and lobbying country delegates on provisions of the Agreed Conclusions. Sociologists for Women in Society obtained special consultative status to the Commission's parent body, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in 1999 and joined some 3,000 other members of civil society in relationship with the United Nations. Since then, SWS delegates have attended Commission meetings on an annual basis, meeting with women from around the world and participating in the process of influencing global norms. Below is a brief description of some of the activities and meetings that we participated in this year.

The priority theme for the 53rd Session was "the equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS." In the first week of the ten-day session, each Commission member state had the chance to present a short statement on the theme. Countries used the opportunity to discuss their specific interests and to highlight their country's achievements. For instance, delegates from Germany discussed their efforts to get men more involved in caregiving by granting a full fourteen months of paid parental leave contingent on the father taking two months of the leave. They noted that under this new policy, sixteen percent of young children in the program were being cared for by their fathers, up from seven percent previously. Iceland and other European countries described similar programs, all involving mandatory paternal involvement in hands-on infant care-giving. Countries less committed to gender equality exploited the opportunity to claim legitimacy in their efforts to advance the status of women despite often dismal records. Although all official delegates to the very first CSW session were female, today many delegates are male including the chair of the Commission, Ambassador Olivier Belle of Belgium. Thus many speakers at the CSW are men. Three of the current four members of the Commission Bureau that drafts the Agreed Conclusions are also male, including the chair.

In addition to attending official CSW meetings, our SWS participants took part in NGO caucuses where women had a chance to discuss issues before the CSW. These strategizing meetings were an opportunity to learn from women familiar with the CSW process who took time to share their experiences and tell new participants how to maneuver effectively around the session. The hands-on approach of woman-to-woman political socialization at the international level helped us better understand the CSW process. It was also a time to hear from women about how their countries were working to either further or hinder gender equality.

The primary concern in caucus meetings was the wording of the draft Agreed Conclusions and the role of CSW member states in modifying the language. The U.S. Caucus met with the U.S. Mission to the CSW several times over the course of the 53rd Session, a clear departure from the practice of the previous U.S. administration, to discuss possible language changes. The U.S. Mission was led by Meryl Frank, Mayor of Highland Park N.J., who had worked extensively on the Family and Medical Leave Act. Scholar activist Ellen Chesler of Hunter College, an expert on reproductive rights, was another Mission member. At the initial meeting with the U.S. Mission, the caucus presented suggestions for language changes. For instance, the caucus wanted recognition that women are not only caregivers for those with HIV/AIDS but also an increasing proportion of patients themselves. They introduced the term "feminization of the pandemic" that was eventually adopted by the Commission. The caucus also successfully got a mention for widows affected by HIV/AIDS. Other language promoted by the caucus was not included despite U.S. Mission support, such as increased female vulnerability to HIV infection due to violence, female genital cutting, and trafficking in women.

At a subsequent meeting with the U.S. Mission, the U.S. Caucus challenged efforts by the delegation to water down language concerning the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Labor Organization
Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention. The U.S. is the only industrialized nation not to have ratified CEDAW and has also failed to ratify the ILO convention. In both cases, the U.S. Mission moved to modify the Agreed Conclusions to make them less forceful, changing "promote ratification" to "consider ratification." The U.S. NGO representatives were distressed that even though the U.S. Mission delegates had significant feminist credentials, they still failed to advocate forcefully for women on some critical issues. A representative of an Afghan NGO, Nasrine Gross, implored the NGO representatives and the United States delegation to do everything possible for the passage of CEDAW arguing that it not only provided a tool for women in the United States but was also important for the U.S. to use in pushing for women's rights in Afghanistan.

As a European, Daniela Jauk had access to the European Caucus, where the European Women's Lobby and the International Alliance of Women were the most active NGOs. The European NGO representatives also were concerned with wording changes, such as the Holy See (the Vatican) adding language on parental rights thought to come out of the fathers' rights movement. They dealt as well with issues concerning representation of women from European countries outside the European Union.

SWS participants attended some "parallel" events held concurrently with the Commission meetings. These parallel events are organized by NGOs and held across the street from the United Nations at the Church Center. Since these events are organized solely by women's groups, it is an opportunity to hear about global women's issues apart from CSW deliberations.

An event that Sarah Swider attended concerned the mixed role of religion in care-giving for those with AIDS, with some religious workers very supportive of medical treatment while others discourage the use of medication, exhorting patients to rely solely on God. Susan Lee attended an event dealing with trafficking in women and the important role of male demand, sometimes from community leaders such as politicians, judges, and clergy, in perpetuating prostitution of impoverished women.

Looking forward, we SWS representatives want to find ways that our organization can effectively and appropriately interact with the Commission on the Status of Women. As an academic organization, we feel that connecting NGOs and official delegates to sociological research and resources would be a worthwhile endeavor. We could create a searchable database of SWS expertise on our website, including geographical and language information, that NGOs could access to find research relevant to their needs. We also could compile a list of research on the CSW priority theme that could be available to CSW member state delegations and NGO participants. As an NGO in consultative status, we have the opportunity to submit brief (1500 word) scholarly statements on the priority theme that become official UN documents and are distributed to member state delegations. The 2010 priority theme will review the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. These SWS efforts would be examples of public sociology, bringing academic research to bear on the production of international policy. We also can use the Commission meetings to educate our students in international gender politics as the SWS chapter at the University of Akron did so successfully at this meeting.

For more information on the SWS experience at the 53rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and for a photo montage, please go to the International Committee page on the SWS website at http://www.socwomen.org/index.php?ss=8.

New Hires at SWS

By Joey Sprague
Past President

On behalf of SWS Executive Council, I am delighted to report that we have taken two giant steps towards our goal of mainstreaming feminist sociology. We have hired Jessica Holden Sherwood to serve as SWS Communications Officer and we have contracted with Jennifer Viegas to serve as our Media Specialist. Both Jessica and Jennifer are already at work helping us increase the presence of feminist sociology in public discourse.

The Communications Officer is responsible for coordinating our organization's public communications, including establishing (in consultation with our Mainstream Committee and media specialist) and executing an annual media plan. Some of the goals of the media plan will be keeping our webpage user-friendly and up-to-date, working as liaison between press contacts and our Mainstream Team, and working with a professional media specialist to identify feminist research that we should be bringing to public attention. Jessica is adding work hours to allow her to take on these new responsibilities. She has already been building her skills in new media and has lots of great ideas for how we might be more effective communicators.

The role of the Media Specialist is to help SWS get mass media coverage of feminist sociological research. This person works in collaboration with both the SWS Communications officer and our internal panel of experts in policy-relevant feminist sociology.

Duties include:

1) helping to identify published feminist sociological research for which the organization should promote media coverage;

2) writing press releases, ads and brochures as requested; and

3) using media contacts to maximize potential coverage. We are very excited about Jennifer's high quality writing, sound strategic sense, and strong media connections.

We had an outstanding search committee, including Cindy Anderson, Virginia Rutter, and Wendy Christensen. The next time you interact with any of them, please thank her for volunteering her expertise and hard work to help us move forward in mainstreaming feminist sociology!
Fact Sheet
Women and Substance Use

Distributed by Sociologists for Women in Society, May 2009
Prepared by Emily E. Tanner-Smith

Substance Use and Abuse among U.S. Women

- Research and policy attention on women and substance use has been historically dominated by a narrative of “pathology and powerlessness” that reduces women to either villains or victims—morally depraved women who fail to perform feminine roles (e.g., related to motherhood), or dependent and powerless victims trapped in a life of addiction.¹ This disempowering narrative shifts focus away from structural conditions related to women’s lived experiences, and often perpetuates misperceptions about women who use substances.

- Results from national surveys show that less than half of U.S. women report any past month use of tobacco, alcohol, or other illicit drugs (see first row of Table 1).² Although most women who use substances do so only experimentally, or recreationally in the pursuit of leisure, a small percentage of women can be classified as substance abusers (i.e., experiencing social, health, financial, legal, or other problems related to their substance use) or substance dependent (i.e., experiencing substance-related problems as well as symptoms of withdrawal/tolerance). For example, in 2007 7.7% of women age 12-17, and 5.5% of women age 18 and older met criteria for any substance abuse/dependence in the past year (see bottom row of Table 1 for breakout by type of substance).³

Table 1. Weighted Percentage of Women Reporting Any Past Month Substance Use Versus Past Year Substance Abuse/Dependence, by Age Group and Type of Substance: 2007 National Survey of Drug Use and Health²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cigarettes</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Any Illicit Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Past Month Use</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Year Abuse/Dependence</td>
<td>2.7% (Nicotine)</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 12-17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Past Month Use</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Year Abuse/Dependence</td>
<td>11.5% (Nicotine)</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18 and Older</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Women who use substances (particularly women who are pregnant or mothers) are often subject to a cultural double standard.⁴ ⁵ This “stigma of the tainted woman” may date back to 19th century middle-class standards of morality associated with the cult of true womanhood, and likely represents a present-day aversion to women’s self-governance or gender nonconformity.⁶ ⁷

- For instance, drug policy discourses often frame pregnant substance users as selfish, lazy, criminals who deserve neither the right to reproduce, nor the custody of their children.⁸ Substance abuse during pregnancy can indeed lead to serious fetal/ neonatal health and behavioral problems (e.g., fetal alcohol syndrome, neonatal abstinence syndrome), but moral panics such as the “crack baby” panic often unnecessarily escalate public levels of fear and anxiety and scapegoat poor minority women.⁹ For instance, recent reviews challenge the widely held assumption that prenatal exposure to cocaine and low/moderate levels of alcohol have a detrimental influence on fetal/neonatal outcomes.¹⁰ ¹¹ Rather, it appears that poverty and economic disadvantage, not substance use, play the largest role on fetal, neonatal, and childhood outcomes.¹² ¹³ As such, these moral panics often serve to direct public attention toward individual level pathologies and away from structural inequities.

- Another misperception often perpetuated by the media is that women of color are the most likely to use and/or abuse substances. But, recent estimates from national surveys indicate that Black, Hispanic, and Asian women generally have lower prevalence estimates of both substance use and
substance abuse/dependence than white, multiracial, Native American/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander women (see Figure 1).²

Figure 1. Weighted Percentage of Women Age 18 and Older Reporting Any Past Month Use Versus Past Year Substance Abuse/Dependence, by Type of Substance and Race/Ethnicity: 2007 National Survey of Drug Use and Health³

Women and Substance Abuse Treatment: Needs and Barriers

- Results from recent national surveys of treatment facilities indicate that women comprise approximately 32% of admissions to structured substance abuse treatment facilities, only 4% of whom are pregnant. These estimates refer to ambulatory, detoxification, residential, and medication-assisted opioid treatment facilities that generally receive state alcohol and drug/agency funds, rather than self-help programs (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous) for which data are not consistently available. The most common primary substance at treatment admission for women is alcohol, followed by opiates, cocaine, stimulants, and marijuana.¹³
- Between 2004 and 2006, an estimated 6.3 million (9.4%) U.S. women between ages 18 - 49 needed treatment for substance abuse or dependence. Of these women, 5.5% perceived the need for treatment but did not receive treatment. Of those 345,000 women, the most common reasons cited for not receiving treatment were: not ready to stop using (36.1%), cost/health insurance barriers (34.4%), and social stigma (28.9%).¹⁴
Stigma, labeling, and guilt are key barriers to treatment for many substance abusing women, who are subject to a cultural double standard that stigmatizes them for violating gendered expectations of behavior.\textsuperscript{15–17}

Many women who abuse substances have a history of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or trauma, and may abuse substances to self-medicate or cope with such traumatic life events.\textsuperscript{18–19} Women who are survivors of abuse or trauma may therefore need treatment program components that help them deal with these traumatic life events. Women-only treatment programs often report better client outcomes after treatment, perhaps because they provide safe spaces for women to explore issues related to histories of trauma.\textsuperscript{20–21} Approximately 32\% of substance abuse treatment facilities in the United States offer special programs or groups for adult women, and 5\% for gays or lesbians.\textsuperscript{22}

Women’s substance abuse often co-occurs with mental illness, particularly anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder. Thus, women may benefit from treatment components that address these comorbidities.\textsuperscript{4–5, 23–24}

Pregnancy is another barrier to substance abuse treatment for women; some pregnant women report postponing or avoiding treatment for valid fear of losing custody of their children.\textsuperscript{17, 25–26} Many states consider substance use during pregnancy a form of child abuse, and some states require health care workers to report or drug test any pregnant mothers they suspect to be using drugs. These policies disproportionately affect poor minority women.\textsuperscript{27–28}

Many women do not receive, or at least postpone, substance abuse treatment because they do not have access to childcare.\textsuperscript{29} Substance abuse treatment programs that provide childcare or allow women to live with their children often report higher treatment retention and better treatment outcomes.\textsuperscript{30}

**Key Actions for Change**

- Challenge sexist assumptions about gender nonconformity that unfairly stigmatize women—particularly pregnant women and mothers—who use or abuse substances.
- Shift research and policy attention away from individualized discourses that focus on women’s individual level risk and pathology. Instead, reframe the issue in terms of structural barriers such as the poverty, racism, and gender oppression that contribute to the etiology of women’s substance use and abuse.\textsuperscript{1, 31}
- Advocate for changes in current legislation that punishes pregnant substance users and disproportionately affects poor minority women. For instance, in contrast to the current system characterized by surveillance and punishment, use results from urine screens to make recommendations for counseling or treatment.
- Promote gender-specific substance abuse treatment models that offer emotionally safe environments in which women can build support networks and deal with traumatic life experiences.\textsuperscript{20–21, 32} However, feminist treatment models that focus on women’s unique needs and barriers should be sensitive to women’s diverse social, cultural, and economic experiences. Treatment models that focus on empowerment in recovery should also be aware that these narratives can place responsibility for recovery solely on the individual, and thus place less emphasis on structural issues related to recovery.\textsuperscript{7}
- Provide women in substance abuse treatment programs with access to child care services. These services would improve treatment engagement, treatment outcomes, and continuation of care after treatment.\textsuperscript{33, 34}
- Include other ancillary services in substance abuse treatment programs such as coordinating care with medical service providers to provide prenatal and pediatric care.\textsuperscript{35} Provide substance abuse treatment program staff with training on medical stabilization for detoxification among pregnant women, as well as the potentially teratogenic effects of drug withdrawal.

**Additional Resources**

- [www.casacolumbia.org](http://www.casacolumbia.org)
- [www.drugabuse.gov/WHGD/WHGDHome.html](http://www.drugabuse.gov/WHGD/WHGDHome.html)
Announcement:
Dr. Doris Wilkinson Receives Women Leading Kentucky’s Lifetime Achievement Award

The University of Kentucky (UK) has announced that Dr. Doris Wilkinson has received the Women Leading Kentucky’s Lifetime Achievement Award. This award reflects a lifetime of ground-breaking efforts by the University of Kentucky sociology professor. Dr. Wilkinson was part of the University of Kentucky’s first class of African-American students as a part of the historic class that began a few months after the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court Decision that helped integrate the institution. Numerous other accomplishments include: founder of the “Ukettes” – the first Black organization at the University of Kentucky, which helped facilitate the bonding experience among the African-American females, who could not join the sororities or belong to any clubs or organizations on the campus; the first UK full-time hire of an African-American female faculty member; received the first appointment as the director of “Black Studies,” which she renamed the African American Studies and Research Program; founder of the Forum for Black Faculty, the Carter G. Woodson Lecture Series and the Black Women’s Conference; and being elected by her peers across the country as the president of the District of Columbia Sociological Society, president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems and president of the Eastern Sociological Society.

News:
Local Chapters

North Central SWS Chapter
Kathy Feltey

The NCSA chapter of Sociologists for Women in Society (NCSA-SWS) hosted a reception for students at the 2009 annual meeting in Dearborn with funding from the national SWS. NCSA-SWS, one of five regional chapters, has been a presence at the regional meeting for many years, hosting lunch meetings for NCSA members to talk about research, teaching, and doing sociology with a focus on gender and women.

This year the reception for students provided a midday break and refreshments to 20 NCSA conference attendees, and a space to talk about feminist sociology and feminists in sociology, and challenges and opportunities for undergraduate and graduate sociology students. Long-time SWS members, Jeanne Ballantine, Mary Senter, and Kathy Feltey, talked about the history of SWS and their personal histories with the organization.

Student attendees talked about their current work, concerns about the future of the job market, the need for feminist mentoring, and feelings of isolation and/or being “spread-too-thin” to seek out opportunities beyond their departments. Some of the students had never heard of SWS and were amazed (and delighted) to learn about the benefits of student membership at the national and local levels.

One highlight was the loud applause and cheering from another meeting in an adjoining room which inspired us as we shared recent accomplishments and milestones!

For more information on NCSA-SWS, including a membership form, visit http://www.ncsanet.org/SWS/index.htm. To become more involved in NCSA-SWS activities, contact Natalie Haber-Barker (nhaber@luc.edu) or Kathy Feltey (felteyk@uakron.edu).

Tallahassee Florida Chapter
Janice McCabe

The Tallahassee chapter met twice this spring and is gearing up for a fall semester of events. We are planning two meetings in the fall – one on feminism and religion and another on gender disparities in health care. In addition, we are excited to have Erica Toothman, a graduate student in the FSU Sociology Department, taking on the new role of chapter co-organizer, with Janice McCabe. Several of our members will be attending the summer meetings in San Francisco – we look forward to seeing you there! Find out more about our chapter and our meetings at: www.sociology .fsu.edu/sws

News:
People and Places

Amy Blackstone was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure in the Department of Sociology at the University of Maine.

Mary Frank Fox (Georgia Tech) is Co-PI for the world’s first Women’s International Research Engineering Summit (W IRES), funded by NSF. In June 09, the Summit brings 50 women engineers from US and 50 from countries outside the US to Barcelona to address research, international collaboration, and global issues of gender equity. Mary Frank Fox is also presenting research on "Analyzing Women in Academic Science" at the Forum of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science in June, and was chosen to present social science perspectives on women in science for the US.

Joya Misra has been promoted to Full Professor of Sociology & Public Policy at UMass-Amherst
An Insight Trip to Guatemala

By Diane Levy
University of North Carolina at Wilmington

The mini van left us at the main road and we had an hour walk in front of us to visit our group of borrowers. Ten of us from Wilmington NC were on a week-long "insight tour" to view the work of Friendship Bridge, a non-profit non-governmental organization (NGO) working in Guatemala to improve the lives of the poor Mayan families. This afternoon we were heading to visit the group that called itself "Puente de Vida", Bridge of Life. With us was the loan officer América who could speak the local Mayan language and translate into Spanish, and Francesca from Friendship Bridge who would translate the Spanish to English. As we made our way toward our village, past lush mountain vistas and deep canyons, we realized that we were quite a novelty for the local residents. They peeked out doorways and around houses to get a look at the gringos. Little children waved and ran away, men stared, stray dogs loped out of sight. The houses were made from traditional adobe bricks. Wild turkeys pecked along the side of the dusty road and many tranquil skinny dogs lay resting in the shade all along our route. The further along we walked, the further we seemed to be going back in time. Only the occasional pick-up truck broke the mood and the quiet.

As we reached the borrower’s house, the women came out to greet us. It was clear that they were waiting for us to arrive. This is a new group of borrowers, headed by two Marias—grandmother and granddaughter. The elder Maria, all of four feet tall, was a force to be reckoned with. She discovered Friendship Bridge at a local market and asked for their assistance for a loan to start a small store—a tienda—on her property. She and her granddaughter, a beautiful young woman of 21—together run the tienda and make enough money to feed and supply the family of nine who live in the small two-room house. In the house, we were shown the beautiful embroidery work and weaving by the younger Maria and the other women in the group. The women work on their textiles making gorgeous blouses called huipiles that the Mayan women all wear. Each woman would work for up to three months on a huipile and then sell it at market. Young Maria could speak Spanish—she had been to school for three years before her father insisted that she stay home and help with the family. She and the other young women giggled and covered their mouths as we asked them about their lives. They were clearly proud of their hard work and their contribution to their families. We were invited to see the tienda—just a small room stocked with snacks, drinks, some vegetables and cleaning supplies. This little shop on such a lonely road allows local residents to avoid long walks to town for goods. The profit from the tienda enables the women to repay their loan and helps pay the school fees and other necessities for the children. As we were leaving, Anna, one of the borrowers, asked if our group would visit her house as well to see her embroidery. We walked on narrow paths up and down hills to another housing compound where we were welcomed by a large family group in their busy courtyard. Anna proudly displayed her hard work. Her loan enabled her to buy the materials to produce embroidered huipiles she could sell at market. As we left this borrower's house for the long walk back to the main road, we were impressed by the difference that Friendship Bridge was making in the lives of these women and their families.

Friendship Bridge is one of several NGO's working in developing nations to combat poverty through microlending. The original concept of microlending was started in Bangladesh by economist Mohammed Yunus. He wrote of his success in microlending and the formation of a communally owned banking system called Grameen Bank in his book, Banker to the Poor: The basic concept is very simple—lend people small amounts of money to start their own businesses to create their own sustainable solutions to poverty in their own communities. It attacks poverty from the bottom up, not the top down. Yunus and others found that when lending money to women for businesses, the profit has the best chance of enriching the entire family. He won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in 2006.

Friendship Bridge employs this concept by lending money to individual women in Guatemala within a system of "trust banks"—groups of borrowers who vouch for each other. Since these are non-collateral loans, the only guarantee is the support of the group. Beginning in 1998 with 30 clients, FB now serves about 14,000 borrowers. Their focus is on the areas in the Western Highlands of Guatemala—the areas that suffered most in the 30-year "civil war" ending in 1996. The average loan today is about $150-$200. For this, the women may purchase some chickens to raise and sell at market; they may rent a small plot and raise vegetables; they may purchase the materials for handicrafts; or may start a small tienda, as we saw in our Puente de Vida group. They meet monthly, usually in the home of one of the borrowers, for group meetings and repayment. At the monthly meetings, a Friendship Bridge loan officer—a local indigenous woman—provides an educational module for the women.

The education component is a unique attribute of Friendship Bridge. For about 30 minutes, the women participate in an informal lesson in one of four general areas—business, health, education of children, and women’s rights. The specific lesson may be on business record keeping, nutrition, contraception, or the importance of education for children. We observed
a repayment meeting in Santiago, the largest town on the shores of Lake Atitlán. That week’s lesson was “the culture of the woman.” The loan officer, a tiny fireball of a woman named María, explained that women’s jobs in Mayan culture are many and important. She used a poster as her visual—the borrowers usually do not read or write. Lots of discussion, giggling, commentary. The idea was to get the women to see their roles as important in the family and build self-esteem.

**Repaying the Loans**

Gender issues are important in the educational component of the group meetings. Some women learn here that it is not considered acceptable for men to beat their women; that there are ways to limit the size of their families; that children who can speak Spanish have a better chance of success. One woman, when asked how long she has been a FB borrower, traced her involvement by the age of the youngest of her 6 children—that’s when she learned there were techniques to avoid having any more. Another borrower learned that regular beatings from her husband were not something she had to passively accept—and told him so. Since he needed her income from her tienda, he stopped. All of the women get support for their children’s education. Although schooling is technically “free,” families must still pay fees for enrollment and supplies. These costs escalate as the children age in school, so many children get educated through grade 3 or so, but by middle school age the fees are too steep, there are too many children in the family, and they are needed at home to work or tend to younger siblings. The current borrowers ensure that their children will be literate.

As a sociologist, this first-hand glimpse into the world of poor Mayan families was a rare opportunity. I’ve traveled many times to developing nations, but never had the chance to learn intimately about the lives of the local people. On this insight trip, I was able to view intentional social change as it was happening. Organizations like FB offer real people real solutions to life’s problems, and their lives and the lives of their children benefit. A loan of a few hundred dollars means the difference between absolute poverty and a sustainable life. FB does not create great wealth for the borrowers, but it does inspire women to use resources to grow businesses and care for their families. What are the men doing? They are usually working in the fields for a few dollars a day, and perhaps assisting their wives in business. Agriculture is still

As a social scientist I was conflicted—do we have the right to come into the world of the Mayan people and intervene in such a way to change their traditional culture, despite the gender inequality that is so evident to us. I asked a staff member of FB how they deal with this issue, and her answer was clear—NOT to intervene in the betterment of the women and families, in this the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, would be a worse alternative. How can we allow this poverty to continue when we can provide tools for families to rise above it?

I came away from my time in Guatemala energized and hopeful. This program was not charity or a hand-out. Microlending offers poor people a way to improve their everyday lives within their own local economy on their own initiative. The women appear resilient and strengthened by their relationships with each other. These programs are dependent on the generosity of donors outside the region to provide the infrastructure and support to run the organization. FB in North America is structured into circles of local women who each support a borrower’s group in Guatemala. You can check their website at www.friendshipbridge.org for a more complete overview of the organization and their work.

1 As a group, women are consistently successful at repaying their loans in a timely fashion, and they are more likely to willingly participate in group lending programs. Likewise, when women earn an income, they obtain more decision-making power within the family and over their own welfare. Women are more likely to use the profits from their businesses to feed their families, improve their living conditions, educate their children, and save money to reinvest in their businesses, 97% of all microcredit services around the world are provided to women.

Source: [www.friendshipbridge.org](http://www.friendshipbridge.org)

2 Inglehart and Norris assert that cultural change, as well as structural policies and improvements in human developments such as health care will bring about a “rising tide” of gender equality on a global scale. Inglehart, R and Norris, P. 2003. Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U Press, p 163.
San Francisco
August 7 - 10, 2009
SWS Summer Meetings

Gender Inequality:
The Trends and What’s Behind Them

Sex and the City:
Sex Workers and the Unionization of Their Labor

Centers of Silence:
Interracial and Intergenerational Tensions

Complete descriptions of these sessions and more can be found on the SWS website

Early registration for the meeting ends July 28 and is only $10 for regular members and $5 for student members

http://www.socwomen.org/meetings.php
Announcement:

Life Celebration for Heather Hartley

By Meika Loe
Colgate University

Heather Hartley was a feminist medical sociologist who passed away at the age of 39 this past year.

We will be celebrating her life and work on Saturday August 8, 7:30-8:30 at the Parc 55 Hotel.

Please feel free to join us.

Announcement:

SWS: Making Change with Investment Dollars

SWS participates in socially responsible investing, which ensures that our investments support only those companies whose actions align with our principles. We will spotlight a new "good work" of our investments in each issue of NetworkNews, starting right here.

Our portfolio includes shares in Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc. The company recently announced a $450,000 grant to the nonprofit Root Capital. The grant will expand financial literacy training for coffee farmers and their communities in Africa and Latin America. For more information, please see www.greenmountaincoffee.com/about and click "News Releases," or www.root-capital.org.

Announcement:

Elizabeth Legerski, Winner of the Feminist White Paper on Health Care Competition

We are pleased to announce that Elizabeth (Liz) Legerski, a doctoral student at the University of Kansas, is the winner of the Feminist White Paper on Health Care competition. Liz's academic work has focused on gender and social policy. She recently defended (with honors!) her dissertation proposal, a study that will focus on how changes in health care access affect poverty and decision-making among women. So we extend a very hearty congratulations to Liz, whose paper is now available on the SWS Wiki website, for a job well done. We would like to also thank the other submitters of paper for this competition, and the Feminist White Paper Committee: Jan Thomas (Chair), Sue Hinze, Mariette Morrissey, and Laura Logan.
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NOTE: This program was designed to bring new members to SWS.

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SWS INTERESTS

SWS works on fostering feminism in sociology and society in several ways. Which of the following two or three are most interesting to you personally?

☐ Publishing feminist scholarship
☐ Fighting discrimination against feminists in the academy
☐ Supporting the careers of feminist sociologists
☐ Helping make feminist social change
☐ Providing resources for feminist teachers
☐ Building membership
☐ Giving scholarships and awards to outstanding feminists

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Application and Practice
A.1. Applied Sociology/Evaluation Research
A.2. Communication and Information Technologies
A.3. Policy Analysis
A.5. Sociological Practice
A.6. Teaching and Learning in Sociology
Comparative and Historical Approaches
B.1. Comparative Sociology/Historical Sociology
B.2. Development
Family, Life Course, and Society
C.1. Aging/Social Gerontology
C.2. Animals and Society
C.3. Children and Youth
C.4. Family
Gender and Sexuality
D.1. Sex and Gender
D.2. Sexualities
Inequalities and Stratification
E.1. Disabilities
E.2. Education
E.3. Race, Class and Gender
E.4. Stratification/Mobility
Medicine and Health
F.1. Alcohol and Drugs
F.2. Medical Sociology
F.3. Mental Health
Place and Environment
G.1. Community
G.2. Environmental Sociology
G.3. Rural Sociology
G.4. Urban Sociology
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H.1. Collective Behavior/Social Movements
H.2. Marxist Sociology
H.3. Military Sociology
H.4. Peace, War, World Conflict, and Conflict Resolution
H.5. Political Economy
H.6. Political Sociology
H.7. Public Policy
H.8. Social Change
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I.2. Demography
I.3. Human Ecology
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J.2. Latina/o Sociology
J.3. Migration/Immigration
J.4. Racial and Ethnic Relations
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K.2. Criminology/Delinquency
K.3. Deviant Behavior/Social Disorganization
K.4. Law and Society
K.5. Penology/Corrections
K.6. Social Control
Social Psychology and Interaction
L.1. Emotions
L.2. Small Groups
L.3. Social Psychology
L.4. Socialization
Sociology of Culture
M.1. Art/Music
M.2. Cultural Sociology
M.3. Leisure/Sports/Recreation
M.4. Mass Communication/Public Opinion
M.5. Religion
M.6. Visual Sociology
Theory, Knowledge, Science
N.1. History of Sociology/Social Thought
N.2. Knowledge
N.3. Rational Choice
N.4. Science and Technology
N.5. Theory
Work, Economy and Organizations
O.1. Economic Sociology
O.2. Labor and Labor Movements
O.3. Occupations/Professions
O.4. Organizations, Formal and Complex
O.5. Social Organization
O.6. Work and Labor Markets
Qualitative Approaches
P.1. Ethnography (Anthropology)
P.2. Ethnomethodology/Conversational Analysis
P.3. Language/Social Linguistics
P.4. Qualitative Methodology
Quantitative Approaches
Q.1. Mathematical Sociology
Q.2. Quantitative Methodology
Q.3. Social Networks
Q.4. Statistics
Q.5. Micro-computing
Local and Regional Chapters

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(Meet on a regular basis)

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