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### From The Editors

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Dear Readers,

We present the Fall 2009 issue of *Perspectives on Social Work* with pride in the progress this journal has made since its birth six years ago. Our original intent was to provide an opportunity for social work doctoral students to share high quality work in a wide range of topics relevant to social work theory and research. Faithful to our original mission, we now receive papers from students across the nation and have developed a blind peer review process to ensure the high quality of articles chosen for publication. We are grateful to the students willing to submit papers for consideration. We are also grateful to the many doctoral students from universities across the country that contribute their time and energy to review the articles and insure a valid blind process.

In this issue, we include the abstracts from the papers presented at the Fifth Doctoral Social Work Student Research Symposium, held at the University of Houston on March 5, 2009. The Symposium represents another effort on the part of doctoral students at the Graduate College of Social Work at the University of Houston to promote a diverse range of high quality research and dissemination within social work. As the abstracts reveal, a wide variety of interesting work is being pursued by doctoral students, and it is our pleasure to help promote awareness of social work students' accomplishments.

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to our invited reviewers who make this journal possible through their selfless dedication to service: Gail Marva Augustine, Indiana University-Purdue University Indiana; Stephen Baldrige, University of Texas at Arlington; Darla Beaty, University of Houston; Ada Cheung, University of Houston; Haresh Dalvi, Indiana School of Social Work; Scott Easton, University of Iowa; Roberta Leal, University of Houston; Joy Malbrough, University of Houston; Saralyn McIver, University of Houston; Tomi Thomas, University of Utah; Venus Tsui, University of Houston; and Ray Woodcock, Indiana University.

Sincerely,  
The Editors

### Guidelines for Submission

Empirical, theoretical, and conceptual articles as well as book reviews are welcome. In order to be considered for publication in *Perspectives on Social Work*, all submissions must meet the following criteria:

- The author must be a currently enrolled doctoral social work student.
- Only original work will be considered. Editors will consider work that has been published elsewhere or is currently under consideration on a case by case basis as long as it is the student's original work and has not been copyrighted elsewhere.
- Only electronic submissions are accepted. Submissions should be e-mailed as a Microsoft Word attachment to the following e-mail address: [journal@sw.uh.edu](mailto:journal@sw.uh.edu)
- Submissions for the featured articles should be 5 – 7 pages in length with not less than one-inch margins and 12-point font. Submissions for book reviews may be 2-4 double-spaced pages. Submissions must be double-spaced.
- If you plan to submit an empirical study with human subjects ensure there has been an IRB review and notate the approval in your paper.
- Submissions must meet APA guidelines (5th Edition) for text, tables, and references.

For more information, inquiries and submissions:  
[Journal@sw.uh.edu](mailto:Journal@sw.uh.edu)

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**Abstracts from the 5<sup>th</sup> Social Work Doctoral Student Research Symposium**  
**Graduate College of Social Work, University of Houston**  
**March 5, 2008**

We are pleased to publish the abstracts from the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Social Work Doctoral Student Research Symposium. The purpose of the annual symposium is to give doctoral students an opportunity to present their research interests to their peers, professors, and the community. Since 2008, social work students from all over the United States have been invited to submit abstracts. This year, the number of submissions was impressive. Following are the accepted abstracts.

**Internalized Symbolic Capital and Day Labor:  
Setting the Discourse through a Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

Elena Delavega, MSW  
University of Houston

There has been increasing interest in researching day labor in the past ten years, and ethnographic studies and surveys have been conducted. However, no conceptual framework for the study of day laborers has been developed. Given the importance of a theoretical framework for the continuance of research, and quantitative research in particular, it is imperative that a conceptual framework be developed now. Social work has a vested interest in the promotion of social justice, and a theoretical paradigm is fundamental to the setting of discursive parameters on the topic of day labor. It behooves social work to be involved in the development of such a paradigm. I propose a conceptual framework that incorporates elements of structural functionalism, the conflict paradigm, social identity theory, the minority identity development model, and Bourdeusian social capital theory.

**Creating a Legacy with Older Adults**

Felina Franklin, LMSW  
University of Houston

The world population is aging at an unprecedented rate and demographic trends indicate an increase in the older adult population. As a result, dramatic age trends with both challenges and opportunities are surfacing. Challenges occur when major transitions in later life lead to social isolation, depression and illness. The purpose of this paper is to explore the opportunity of assisting the growing number of elders in creating a legacy that focuses on the survival and strength of each individual's experiences. Existing literature is reviewed that includes defining legacy, the need for creating a legacy, gaining control over legacy, and translating legacy into present learning. A framework utilizing existential, gestalt, and narrative theory will be used to discuss the importance of legacy. Future implications include suggestions for further study in areas of defining variables and developing measures that capture the effects of creating a legacy.

## **Impact of Childhood Abuse on Early Sexual Activity: A Longitudinal Study**

Mugdha S. Galande, MSW  
University of South Carolina

Extant research suggests that sexual activity during adolescence has unfavorable and often irreversible consequences that affect individuals. This study builds a theoretical framework by integrating attachment and social learning theories to examine the associations among three types of childhood abuse and early sexual activity. Specifically, this research proposes to examine associations between physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect, and early sexual activity using longitudinal research design and logical temporal order of constructs. A series of nested logistic regressions will be employed to analyze nationally representative data of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (AddHealth) Wave I –Wave III. It is expected all types of abuse will be positively associated with increased early sexual activity however; this association may be attenuated by factors underlying parent-child relationships. Findings of the study will inform social work practitioners and policy-makers enhance the quality of existing pregnancy and HIV prevention programs.

## **The Baby-Boomers Meet Menopause: Attitudes and Roles**

Judy Strauss, LMSW  
Yeshiva University

Attitudes toward menopause were examined in a sample of 1,037 baby-boomer women who took part in the Midlife in the United States survey. Attitudes to menopause were assessed in terms of four critical questions, based on the work of Rossi (2004): feelings about fertility, health, attractiveness, and overall affective response to menopause (i.e., regret vs. relief). Analyses were replicated in two waves of the study separated by nine years. More positive attitudes towards menopause were found among younger women who occupied more roles and who reported fewer menopausal symptoms, as well as older women (particularly older women who were financially secure). Contrary to expectations, less-educated women reported more positive attitudes. Baby-boomers may experience menopause differently as a result of having multiple roles as homemaker, wife, mother, caregiver for elderly or frail family members, and employee. Findings suggest ways in which social workers can support women in the “sandwich generation” during the menopausal transition.

## **Older Prisoner Health**

Lisa Jennings, LCSW  
University of Alabama

Older prisoner health is a public health issue. Inmate health affects individuals, prisons, families, institutional caregivers, and communities. There are over 150,000 elder prisoners in correctional facilities nationwide (Aday, 2003). Aged prisoner health is poor; there is a prevalence of chronic health concerns: hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, heart problems and sensory losses.

This case study explores health in a facility for aged/infirm prisoners. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted (four older male prisoners (60 and up), and twelve collateral

participants: healthcare staff, families, and church volunteers. Each inmate's healthcare story represents a case. Emergent themes (challenges, care process; support; communication; policies) were derived by constant comparative approach.

There are direct implications for social workers. Participants expressed frustration and satisfaction with components of the current system. Older inmates face critical needs. New policies could provide avenues for change in prison healthcare and how the outside community views this marginalized group in society.

### **Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Research: Concepts and Practice Panel Discussion**

Betul Balkan, MA, Tawana Cummings, MA, LMSW, CHES, Roberta Leal, LMSW, Monique Pappadis, M.Ed., CHES, CCRP, Alexis Rose, M.S.W, Corrine Walijarvi, MS, MBA, MSW  
University of Houston

The panel presentation will consist of an interactive discussion on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research by six doctoral students from the Graduate College of Social Work. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research has been widely used in the natural sciences and is becoming increasingly common in the social sciences. Social workers, in particular, often work in settings where they interact with policy makers, health care workers, and mental health workers. The students will discuss actual or planned experiences with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary work and will highlight the benefits and challenges of working with other disciplines. In addition, the panel will discuss ways to develop and promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research in doctoral programs.

### **The Impact of Acculturation on First Generation Puerto Rican Women's Identity: An Exploratory Study**

Ana Selma Berrios, LCSW  
Smith College

The purpose of the study is to explore and advance knowledge about the impact of the acculturation process on first generation Puerto Rican women's identity. What is the impact of the process of acculturation on the identity of first generation Puerto Rican women? Do these women feel a sense of loss and how is it manifested in their daily lives? This study uses a mixed method design, qualitative and quantitative, with an emphasis on defining the experience of loss and its manifestation during the redefinition of identity. The mixed method is not equally balanced as the emphasis was placed on the use of a semi-structured interview. It aims to identify themes embedded within the migration narrative that might be similar for other immigrant women. It seeks to contribute to the knowledge of cultural competent mental health practices.

## **A Description and Analysis of Problems and Interventions Used to Improve the Well-being of Nursing Home Residents with Advanced Dementia**

Dennis Chapman, LICW-R  
State University of New York

This dissertation described and analyzed the problems and interventions used to improve the well-being of 118 nursing home residents with dementia. The problems were identified and interventions were developed during an evaluation of advanced illness care teams at two skilled nursing facilities. All of the identified problems were categorized using a six-dimensional assessment framework. A count of the problems by category and a reliability analysis were carried out to evaluate the usefulness of the six-dimensional model. A low frequency of problems in some categories and a Cohen's kappa of .73 (reliability analysis) provided little support for the six-dimensional model. Implications for social work practice: the biopsychosocial assessment traditionally used by social workers captures the common problems of pain and depression observed in the study population. The prevalence of agitation suggests that a behavioral dimension could be added to the biopsychosocial assessment as a discrete domain.

## **Six Major Themes Emerging from a Review of Recent Articles on Grief and Bereavement**

Corrine Walijarvi, MS, MBA, MSW  
University of Houston

The presentation will identify six key themes in the field of grief and bereavement that emerged from an analysis of 61 peer-reviewed articles published during the last decade. Each article was selected on the basis of presenting a contribution to grief and bereavement research and theories. Identified themes include developments in theories regarding the concept of pathological grief, developments in theories regarding factors that promote recovery from grief, and developments in theories of growth following a traumatic loss. Research findings regarding the effectiveness of programs and interventions designed to assist the bereaved will be highlighted. The recent theoretical developments and research findings include significant departures from stage-based models of grief, and will be beneficial for social workers who provide services to grieving individuals or families.