



University of Cambridge

Centre for Family Research

Annual Report 2009-2010



Centre for Family Research

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This academic year got off to a bright start with the launch party at Pembroke College for our Wellcome Trust Enhancement Award in biomedical ethics entitled “Bioethics, assisted reproduction and the family”. This was held jointly with the Department of History and Philosophy of Science to launch their Wellcome Trust Strategic Award in the history of medicine. Both projects focus on assisted reproduction and are based in Free School Lane which will facilitate collaboration and cross-fertilisation between the two groups over the next 5 years. We were delighted that Liz Shaw and Jacob Leveridge from the Trust were able to join us at the party. The highlight of the year for this project was a two-day workshop in September on reproductive donation, i.e. gamete donation (the donation of sperm, eggs and embryos) and surrogacy (the donation of the body for reproductive purposes), that brought together leading bioethicists and researchers from around the world to discuss the impact of reproductive donation on the family. The workshop has produced a book entitled “Reproductive Donation: Bioethics, policy and practice” to be published by Cambridge University Press.

A pleasing development over the past year has been spontaneous collaboration between the three research groupings of the Centre. The bioethics project is a joint venture between the Non-traditional Families team and the Genetics, Health and Families team. A further collaborative project carried out by these two teams, particularly by Helen Statham and Sarah Jennings, was a study of the school experiences of children with lesbian and gay parents commissioned by Stonewall. This produced a report, available to all schools in the UK, with recommendations from the children themselves on

how schools could deal with this issue in a more sensitive way. There has also been increasing synergy between the Children's Social and Cognitive Development team and the Non-traditional Families team with respect to research methodologies and the study of child development across different ethnic and cultural groups.

The Centre for Family Research Seminar Series featured a fascinating set of speakers from a range of disciplinary backgrounds including Sociology, Psychology, Social Anthropology, Philosophy, Bioethics and Law. Not only do we aim to include researchers from both within and external to the Centre but also at different stages of their career. This latter aim was met this year with two PhD students and an Emeritus Professor on our list of speakers. Our seminar topics were "Family and kinship in a genetic era" Professor Martin Richards, Centre for Family Research; "Memory Research in Autism: Past Achievements and Prospects for the Future" Professor Dermot Bowler, City University, London; "The Dunedin New Zealand Longitudinal Study: Is psychiatric disorder in early life a preventable cause of disease in late life?" Professor Terrie Moffitt, Institute of Psychiatry, London; "Bioethics and fatherhood: sketching the issues" Dr Jon Ives, University of Birmingham; "Young siblings' prosocial behaviour and their success with peers", Alex Marks, Centre for Family Research; "Love-Arranged-Forced": British South-Asian Marriage in the UK" Dr Perveez Mody, Department of Social Anthropology, Cambridge; "The impact of couple relationship breakdown on adults and children: Key findings from an extensive literature review" Dr Lester Coleman, One Plus One, London; "Parenthood - whose right is it

anyway?" Dr Anja Karnein, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt; "Lesbian and Gay Parenting and European Human Rights Law: When will France catch up with the UK?" Professor Robert Wintemute, King's College, London; "Migration, multiculturalism and acculturation: Indian diaspora in the UK" Professor Ravinder Barn, Royal Holloway College, London; and "Family-based affirmative action? Lesbian and gay families' communication strategies at school" Marcin Smietana, University of Barcelona. We are most grateful to Lucy Blake for her tireless efforts in organising this highly popular seminar series.

Our *ad hoc* methodology workshops continued this year with a workshop on empirical bioethics presented by Dr Jon Ives from the University of Birmingham. This interactive workshop was designed as an introduction to the motivations behind, and methods of, empirical bioethics and proved to be extremely relevant for all of those working on the bioethics project. Professor Barbara Maughan from the Institute of Psychiatry led an illuminating workshop on investigator-based interviewing that was much appreciated by members of the Centre who are involved in this style of interviewing. In addition, Dr Rosie Ensor ran a training workshop on the coding of observational data of mother-child interaction that was enormously helpful to those who were new to this approach to data analysis. Several of us also attended the workshops on statistical modelling held by the Psychometrics Centre. As before, we have been involved in lecturing to and supervising students both on the undergraduate Politics, Psychology and Sociology (PPS) Tripos and on the MPhil in Social and Developmental Psychology.

Visiting Scholars this year were Professor Ravinder Barn from Royal Holloway College, London who was working on parenting in ethnic minority families and Marcin Smietana whose research focuses on gay father families. Zimran Samuel, a barrister with an interest in adoption by same-sex parents, also spent time at the Centre this year. On the run up to the general election we were visited by politicians and lobbyists including David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Skills, who at that time was concerned with family policy, and Phillip Blond, Director of the think-tank ResPublica.

The social life of the Centre took a new turn this year with the inauguration of CFR Film Night, a termly event where we watch a film about family life in the comfort of Newnham College MCR. The first film of the season was "Central Station", a Brazilian film about a young boy's search for his father, and the second was "The boys are coming home", an Australian film about a father's relationship with his sons.

This year we have had superb administrative support from Katie Earnshaw and Holly Barclay, both of whom helped us out on a temporary, part-time basis while writing up their PhDs. In June we were delighted to have Hita Hirons join the centre on a more long-term basis as an Administrative Assistant. Very special thanks are due to Abby and Hita for the incredible flair and efficiency with which they organised the Bioethics workshop in September.

Professor Susan Golombok, Director, 1st November 2010.

Non-traditional Families Research Team

Professor Susan Golombok

After a long history of research on children in lesbian mother families, in October we began our first study of gay father families. This became possible through an ESRC grant awarded to Susan Golombok and Michael Lamb. The study will be one of the first in the world to study the development of children raised by two fathers and is particularly timely in the UK given the recent rise in the number of gay men who are adopting children and the recent change in the law that allows gay men to become the legal parents of children born through surrogacy. Sarah Jennings, a graduate of the Faculty, and Laura Mellish, who returned to the Centre in July after completing her Psychology degree, have been making excellent progress with the study, liaising with the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), New Family Social (a support group for gay and lesbian parents) as well as local authorities and adoption agencies up and down the country. Data collection with the families began in July and is expected to continue for the next 15 -18 months.

Our longitudinal study of assisted reproduction families is also progressing well, with the fifth and final phase of data collection almost complete. Much of the year has been spend in the coding and analysis of data and writing papers from the fourth phase of the study when the children were aged 7. We have also given a number of presentations on the findings of the study. Dr Vasanti Jadva, who returned from maternity leave in January, gave a paper at an ESRC Workshop on Psychology and Education in Bangalore, India and at the

International Gestational Surrogacy Conference in Taiwan. Lucy Blake gave papers in Cambridge at the Cambridge Interdisciplinary Reproductive Forum and at the Social & Developmental Psychology Seminar Series, and in Edinburgh at the CRFR International Conference on Changing Families in a Changing World. Polly Casey presented the findings of her PhD research in Cambridge at the Darwin Science Seminar Series and at the PPSIS Graduate Seminar Series. We were sorry to say farewell in September to Jenny Readings who has been a research assistant on this project since 2007. Jenny has decided to pursue a career in clinical psychology and we wish her every success in the future.

Another new grant this year was obtained from the London Women's Clinic to conduct a study of egg-sharing (whereby women donate their eggs to other women in exchange for reduced-cost fertility treatment). This exciting new project, being carried out by Zeynep Gurtin-Broadbent, is exploring the experiences of women who have taken part in egg-sharing either as recipients or as donors. Zeynep has given seminars on this research to the Policy, Ethics and Life Sciences Research Centre in Newcastle, at the Fondation Brocher in Geneva, and has written a review paper for discussion as part of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology's review of donation policies. Dr Tabitha Freeman, also working in the field of assisted reproduction, returned from maternity leave in January and has been writing up the findings of her Nuffield Foundation study of adolescents conceived by donor insemination.

Humera Iqbal has been busy liaising with primary schools across London and interviewing mothers and children for her PhD research on parenting and child development in British South Asian families. Susanna Graham and John Appleby took up their PhD studentships on the bioethics project in October. Susanna is exploring the experiences and ethical decision-making of single women embarking upon motherhood through the use of donor sperm. John is approaching his PhD from a more philosophical perspective, examining the question "Should children be told that they are donor conceived?" He is also co-editor of the book on reproductive donation arising from the bioethics project.

Professor Susan Golombok gave a number of presentations this year including papers at the 3rd DVR Conference of Reproductive Biology and Medicine, Freiburg, Germany; the American Society of Reproductive Medicine Mental Health Group, New York; New School University, New York; UBS Bank, New York and London; Nuffield Council on Bioethics, London; Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, Columbia University, New York; and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York. She also became a member of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority Donation Policy Advisory Committee.

Children's Social and Cognitive Development Research Team

Dr Claire Hughes

The year has been very productive in all sorts of ways so this report offers a welcome opportunity to heap praise upon several team members. First of all, warm congratulations go to Alex Marks who, shortly after announcing her engagement to her partner Carol, sailed through her PhD viva with flying colours. Alex's dedicated and methodical approach to writing up her thesis was an inspiration to the whole team, and certainly helped me to find the focus I needed to complete my book about the Toddlers Up study (entitled "Social Understanding, Social Lives" to be published as part of the Psychology Press series 'Essays in Developmental Psychology' in February 2011). Congratulations also go to Gabriela Petrut, who is now engaged to her partner Bogdan, and will soon be known as Gabriela Roman.

Second, the Toddlers Up study continued to be a rich mine for analyses of children's social and cognitive development. This is largely thanks to Dr Rosie Ensor, who has been a shining example of how to teach oneself model-fitting in Mplus, as well as a wonderful advisor to others in the Centre for Family Research who have embarked on the same journey to skilled model-fitting. As a result, our research team has been able to publish a series of longitudinal analyses that straddle children's transition to primary school and cover a diversity of topics including: (i) sibling relationships, and their significance for children's antisocial behaviour towards peers (ii) proximal and distal links between children's understanding of thoughts and beliefs and their

talk to friends about mental states, and (iii) origins and consequences of variation in growth in children's executive functions. The papers reporting these findings have been accepted by leading journals, including the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, the Journal of Experimental Psychology and Developmental Neuropsychology, and presented at an ESRC Workshop on Psychology and Education in Bangalore, India and the Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Social and Behavioural Development, held in Zambia in July 2010; as well as at this year's meeting (in London) of the British Psychological Society Developmental Section.

This report is also an opportunity to welcome several 'new arrivals', including five new PhD students; two of whom (Rory Devine and Nao Fujita) joined in October 2009, and three (Adelle Pushparatnam, Naomi White and Keri Wong) in October 2010. Rory Devine has had a remarkably successful first year, in which he has developed and established an entertaining new measure for assessing individual differences in 'theory of mind' skills in older children and adolescents, using brief clips from Harold Lloyd's classic silent movie 'Safety Last'. Rory Devine has also been involved in another study of theory of mind and social success among children making the transition to secondary school; data-collection for this second study was conducted by two third year undergraduates; Sarah Scott and John Mills (who will shortly be starting a PhD at the Institute of Psychiatry in London). In addition, Rory Devine has joined the study of cross-cultural contrasts in theory-of-mind skills, and has used model fitting both to demonstrate the validity of these comparisons (i.e. latent factors show across-country measurement invariance) and to replicate

earlier findings of relatively early development of theory-of-mind skills in British children, compared with either Italian or Japanese children. Others from the Centre for Family Research involved in this cross-cultural study include Dr Rosie Ensor and Lauren Allen (who completed her MPhil in July 2010), as well as the second of our new PhD students, Nao Fujita who helped with translating tasks into Japanese. Building on this work, Nao Fujita is currently working incredibly hard collecting data in Kyoto for her own Anglo-Japanese study, which includes direct assessments of key cultural constructs (e.g. attitudes to parenting) with an emphasis on specific social milestones in child development.

During the year, we have also had a hosted a few visiting scholars. For example, Ai Mizokawa, who is in the final year of her PhD at Kyoto University (working under the supervision of Professor Masuo Koyasu), came on a three-month visit at the start of 2010 and, thanks to the statistical support she received from Rory Devine, was able to return with a model of the data from Japanese children's responses to theory of mind tasks. This visit was also useful in enabling Nao Fujita to set up links with psychologists at Kyoto University that are likely to prove useful during her current fieldwork in Japan. Another visitor to the CFR this year was Dr Serena Lecce from the University of Pavia who came on a shorter trip to discuss her work on three different collaborative studies with Dr Claire Hughes. Next year we hope that the exchange will be two-way – to this end Rory Devine has been brushing up his Italian!

One of our three most recent PhD students, Adelle Pushparatnam, actually arrived in Cambridge in October 2009, but a shortage of funding led to her taking the MPhil course in the first instance. This proved to be a very wise decision, because she graduated with the highest mark for her year and consequently gained a domestic scholarship to progress on to a PhD. Although distinctive in its focus on autism (rather than typical development), Adelle Pushparatnam's proposed PhD research complements the other PhD studies in this group. In particular, the plan is to administer the Silent Movies task to children with Autism growing up in the West and in the developing world (specifically, Malaysia and India). Adding to this venture, Gabriela Petrut, Serena Lecce and Ai Mizokawa are planning to administer the Silent Movies task to typically developing children in Romania, Italy and Japan. As a result, we should shortly be able to follow up our cross-cultural comparison of social understanding in 5- to 6-year-olds with a second study involving a new measure of social understanding in older children. Naomi White and Keri Wong, our other two new members, arrived in Cambridge just a month ago, and so have yet to develop clear plans for their PhD research – although both are hoping to work on the Toddlers Up study. I'd like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to both of them.

Genetics, Health and Families Research Team

Helen Statham

During the past year, there has been a continuation of the work traditionally carried out by those of us who see ourselves as primarily within the Genetics, Health and Families grouping of the Centre, but there has also been an increasing amount of what we might call 'crossing boundaries'. This is in part because of the involvement of some of us (Irenee Daly, Professor Martin Richards and Helen Statham) in the Wellcome Trust funded programme of work on the bioethics of new family forms and also because Helen Statham worked specifically on a joint project on the school experiences of children with lesbian and gay parents with the Non-traditional Families Research Team. Another link is through the focus on ethics. As the Centre reflects increasingly on bio-ethical issues arising from the use of new reproductive technologies, the Genetics, Health and Families group focus increasingly on research ethics.

The empirical work undertaken addresses the most sensitive aspects of family life, embracing end of life care (Dr Gail Ewing), living kidney donation (Jenny Prufe), genetic disorders (Professor Martin Richards and Helen Statham), decision-making about pregnancy (Irenee Daly), perinatal bereavement (Claire Snowdon and Helen Statham) and late termination of pregnancy (Helen Statham). It is not surprising, therefore, that consideration of the ethical issues that arise from undertaking such research is a key part of the research itself. As a result we have within the Centre a wealth of experience

on research design and practice that we can share – for example, relating to the sensitive recruitment of participants to studies and research design so that studies meet the increasingly strict criteria laid down by NHS Research Ethics Committees. At times it feels that an important aspect of our work is to challenge the presumptions and preconceptions about what individuals will find acceptable and unacceptable areas of research in order to ensure that those individuals are given the opportunity to express their views.

So what has this meant in practice? Perhaps the least contentious research is the immensely topical study by Irene on ‘family planning’ but family planning in the context of how professional women come to defer childbearing and whether they are aware of age-related decline in fertility. The implications are both bioethical and technological with the likelihood of women becoming increasingly dependent on assisted reproduction with its stresses, failures and costs – all of which Irene has addressed in debates and presentations.

As in previous years, research on pregnancy and childbirth has concentrated on the negative outcomes, in particular when babies die. Dr Claire Snowdon has explored this via the BRACELET Study which considers issues raised when babies die when they have been part of neonatal intensive care trials. So far this has involved interviews with trialists, academics and clinicians. Interviews with bereaved parents will commence in the coming months after considerable effort to obtain the relevant permissions to approach the parents. Helen Statham’s work also includes both practitioners and parents and

dissemination of findings from studies on post-mortem decision-making and provision of late termination after prenatal diagnosis is ongoing.

Jenny Pruefe more than anyone in the Centre deserves recognition for the work she undertook in obtaining a favourable ethical opinion to carry out her research with children and young adults with severe kidney disease such that their families were considering living donation of a kidney. Now in the 3rd year of her PhD, she is collecting data at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London interviewing children who are suffering from chronic kidney disease as well as their parents. The work has also involved families in Germany. She has already presented some findings at an international congress in Cologne. She heard earlier this year that she has been awarded a visiting fellowship at the prestigious Fondation Brocher in Geneva for the summer of 2011.

Dr Gail Ewing takes us to the end of life, with work that is relevant to much government policy – the role of family carers in supporting dying relatives in their wish to die at home. She is a member of the International Taskforce for Family Carers, an international group of family carer researchers established within the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC) and led by Professor Sheila Payne. Her studies have been important in showing the importance of family members in enabling terminally ill patients who wish to die at home to do so and in highlighting that the family carer has needs for support as well that are largely ignored. She has been awarded a number of grants this year (via the university of Manchester, from The BUPA Foundation

and Dimbleby Cancer Care) which have funded studies to develop and evaluate a 'What matters to family carers' assessment tool. The studies are carried out with colleagues from the universities of Manchester and Lancaster. Findings have been presented at the European Association for Palliative Care International Conference and the International Palliative Care Congress as well as at the Annual Conference National Forum for Hospice at Home and numerous individual hospice services.

Genetics has been a less prominent aspect of work this last year although findings from the Genetics of Learning Disabilities study are still being disseminated, including a presentation at the European Society of Human Genetics Conference. Professor Martin Richards has completed an autobiographical study of personal genome scans now being offered by a number of commercial companies. He is also involved as a co-editor and contributor to three books: "Reproductive Donation: Bioethics, Policy and Practice", "Birth Rites and Rights: A socio-legal analysis" and "Blackwell companion to the sociology of the family". Professor Richards is Vice Chair of the UK Biobank Ethics and Governance Council and a member of the Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Human Tissue Committee.

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Lucy Blake

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Professor Susan Golombok

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Dr Claire Hughes

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Dr Vasanti Jadva

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Sarah Jennings

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Alex Marks

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Jenny Prüfe

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Jenny Readings

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Professor Martin Richards

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Richards, M. (2010). Reading the runes of my genome: a personal exploration of retail genetics. *New Genetics and Society*, 29, 291-310.

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Helen Statham

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CURRENT GRANTS

XJAG/043

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok
Investigator: Dr Tabitha Freeman
Title: Single mothers by choice
Sponsor: The Isaac Newton Trust
Period: September 2010 – August 2012
Amount: £37,163

XJAG/042

Grant holder: Dr Gail Ewing
Investigator: Dr Gail Ewing
Title: Carer tool development work
Sponsor: Bupa Foundation
Period: June 2010 – January 2011
Amount: £15,934

XJAG/041

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok
Investigator: Zeynep Gurtin Broadbent
Title: Egg sharing in IVF treatments: Bioethical and psychosocial implications
Sponsor: The London Women's Clinic
Period: February 2010 – January 2012
Amount: £73,175

XJAG/040

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok & Helen Statham
Investigator: Helen Statham & Sarah Jennings
Title: The school experiences of children with same-sex parents
Sponsor: Stonewall
Period: October 2009 – December 2010
Amount: £25,400

XJAG/039

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok (PI) & Prof. Michael Lamb (CI)
Investigator: Sarah Jennings and Laura Mellish
Title: Parenting and the psychological development of children in gay father families
Sponsor: ESRC
Period: October 2009 – September 2012
Amount: £351,863

XJAG/038

Grant holder: Dr Gail Ewing
Investigators: Dr Gail Ewing
Title: Development of an assessment tool for evaluation of care and support at the end of life.
Sponsor: BUPA Foundation
Period: June 2010 – January 2011
Amount: £15,934

XJAG/037

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok (PI), Dr Tabitha Freeman, Dr Vasanti Jadva, Dr Shirlene Badger, Helen Statham & Professor Martin Richards
Investigator: To be appointed
Title: Redefining families: Bioethics, assisted reproduction and emerging family forms.
Sponsor: Wellcome Trust
Period: 1/4/2009 – 31/3/2014
Amount: £350,000

XJAG/036

Grant holder: Dr Rosie Ensor
Investigator: Dr Rosie Ensor
Title: Post-doctoral Fellowship
Sponsor: British Academy
Period: November 2008 – October 2011
Amount: £272,845

XJAG/

Grant holder: Professor Susan Golombok
Investigator: Humera Iqbal
Title: Doctoral Fellowship
Sponsor: Laura Ashley Foundation
Period: October 2008 – September 2011
Amount: £54,000

XJAG/033

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok
Investigator: Dr Vasanti Jadva, Lucy Blake, Polly Casey & Jenny Readings
Title: Families created by assisted reproduction: Parenting and child development.
Sponsor: NIH
Period: September 2007 – August 2012
Amount: \$1,147,500

XJAG/023

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok

Investigator: Dr Tabitha Freeman.

Title: Adolescents conceived by donor insemination.

Sponsor: The Nuffield Foundation

Period: April 2006 – December 2010

Amount: £120,000