

# Centre for Family Research

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The academic year at the Centre for Family Research began with the exciting news that we had won a prestigious and highly competitive Wellcome Trust Bioethics Enhancement Award. This is a new departure for the Centre, resulting from collaboration between two of our research groupings, Non-Traditional Families and Genetics, Health and Families, enabling us to build capacity in bioethics and integrate bioethical analysis with empirical research in studies of families created by assisted reproductive technologies. The project will focus particularly on gay fathers, solo mothers and donor siblings. In addition to the co-applicants from the Centre (Dr Tabitha Freeman, Professor Susan Golombok, Zeynep Gurtin Broadbent, Dr Vasanti Jadva, Professor Martin Richards, Helen Statham) we shall be joined by Professor Martin Johnson from the Department of Anatomy; the Directors of two of the largest fertility clinics in the UK (Dr Kamal Ahuja, London Women's Clinic and Dr Mike MacNamee, Bourn Hall); an international team of bioethicists from Universities in the United States (Dr Robert Klitzman, Columbia University), Belgium (Dr Guido Pennings, University of Ghent) and Switzerland (Dr Effy Vayena, University of Zurich); a psychologist (Dr Andrea Braverman, RMA New Jersey) and a lawyer (Dr Yolanda Garcia Ruiz, Valencia University). Our first task was to select two PhD students for the project and we are looking forward to John Appleby, who has a background in philosophy and bioethics, and Susanna Graham, who is medically qualified, joining us in October. The Award also allowed us to appoint a new Administrator. We are delighted to welcome Abby Scott who has calmly stepped into this role,

taken over the day-to-day administration of the Centre and generally lightened our lives.

Another new venture has been the Centre's first study of parenting and child development in different ethnic groups, made possible by the award of a Studentship from the Laura Ashley Foundation. Humera Iqbal, the recipient of this award, has begun a study of second generation Indian and Pakistani families in the UK. This work will dovetail with the cross-cultural research being conducted by Dr Claire Hughes' team (see below). Together, these projects will add an extra dimension to the research of the Centre.

Our visiting scholars this year also brought fresh ideas. Particular thanks are due to Fauzia Shaikh, from the Department of Government at Harvard, who assisted us with the establishment of a collection of books and papers on bioethics. We also hosted two returnees, Dr Kerry Petersen from the School of Law at La Trobe University in Melbourne who was working on a book on pre-implantation genetic diagnosis and abortion and Dr Yolanda Garcia Ruiz from the University of Valencia who was writing about assisted reproduction and the law. Yasmin Ilyas, a medical student from Penang University, spent her non-clinical placement with us learning about social and ethical aspects of pre-natal diagnosis.

The Centre for Family Research Seminar Series continued to showcase a diverse range of speakers from the fields of Law "Mums, Dads, Donors and

Surrogates - How the law determines parenthood” Natalie Gamble, Associate of Lester Aldridge Solicitors, and “Parents in Court: the role of family advocacy” Mavis Maclean, University of Oxford; Psychology “What is it like to be a small child?” Dr Charles Fernyhough, Durham University, “A Biopsychosocial Perspective on Children's Adjustment to Adoption” Professor David Brodzinsky, Rutgers University and “Does bullying victimisation drive you crazy? New Follow-up findings and a virtual intervention strategy” Professor Dieter Wolke, University of Warwick; Health 'They just take these genes and fix 'em together and create a fake human': views from deaf people about genetics” Dr Anna Middleton, Cardiff University, “Parenting practices and psychological well-being in midlife: life course associations among women in the 1946 British birth cohort study” Dr Rosemary Abbott , University of Cambridge and “Choices at the end of Life: the importance of family carers” Dr. Gail Ewing, University of Cambridge; Sociology “Working At It: the practical, relational and moral aspects of sustaining fatherhood beyond couplehood” Georgia Phillip, Open University; History “Maternal Love and the Great War” Dr Michael Roper, Essex University; and Policy “Divorced from reality: how party politics has lost touch with the UK family” Dr Anastasia de Waal, Civitas.

In addition to the seminars, we continued with the series of methodology workshops first introduced last year. The focus this year was largely on MPlus, a software package for statistical modelling, thanks to an ESRC Researcher Development Initiative Award held jointly by the Department of Psychiatry, the

Psychometrics Centre and the Centre for Family Research. Several workshops on Mplus were run by Dr Tim Croudace from the Department of Psychiatry and attended by members of the Centre, some of whom have become highly proficient. The spirits of those who are still struggling are being kept up by the support and assistance of their fellow Mplus users! In addition, a highly informative workshop on Atlas-ti, a software package for the analysis of qualitative data, was held by Dr Gail Ewing. As a result, several researchers and PhD students have attended additional training courses on qualitative data analysis. As well as learning new skills, we have been engaged in teaching others. Several members of the Centre have been involved in lecturing and supervising for Tripos papers, particularly the papers on Development and Psychopathology and The Family, and teaching on the Social and Developmental Psychology MPhil. We also ran a session for graduate students on applying for research grants.

The summer months have seen the transformation of the Tower from a cluttered and dingy set of rooms into a bright and streamlined space that will house our new projects in bioethics, assisted reproduction, ethnicity and gay father families. It is particularly pleasing that the character of this part of the building, where Rutherford famously used to bellow at his staff, has been maintained. We are most grateful to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences for making this renovation possible.

The social life of the Centre has continued to revolve around 11am coffee. Cocktails at the Snug following our termly meeting, and our Christmas party at the Hotel du Vin, are also becoming Centre traditions. We are pleased to have had social as well as academic events to celebrate this year. Congratulations are due to Shirlene Badger on two counts. Firstly, for being awarded a PhD for her thesis entitled “A genetic diagnosis for obesity: social and moral experiences of the body and responsibility in childhood”. Secondly, for her marriage to Ben Benstead in August. We wish them much happiness together. Shirlene has now taken up a research position at King’s College, London. Dr Anji Wilson has also left us but not strayed far – to the Psychometrics Centre in the Mond Building - and we are pleased that she remains a regular visitor. We have celebrated two births this year. In March, Dr Tabitha Freeman gave birth to Martha and in June Dr Vasanti Jadva gave birth to Dayna. The girls are already firm friends and look so adorable that we couldn’t resist including their photo!

Professor Susan Golombok, Director, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2009.





## **Non-Traditional Families**

The study of donor siblings (genetic half-siblings born through donor insemination and growing up in different families) carried out by Dr Freeman, Dr Jadva and Professor Golombok made quite an impact this year, attracting international press and radio coverage following publication of the findings. The research identified a new phenomenon whereby family relationships based on genetic connections between children are being formed across multiple family units. The study has attracted a great deal of interest from policy makers around the world as many countries are currently in the process of developing regulatory procedures and legislation regarding the release of identifying information about donors and donor siblings to donor conceived children. In the UK, the new Human Fertilisation and Embryology (2008) Act which came into force on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 will not only allow donor conceived individuals at age 18 to seek identifying information about their donor but also their donor siblings.

Lucy Blake, Polly Casey and Jenny Readings began data collection on the 5<sup>th</sup> phase (age 9) of their longitudinal study of children conceived by assisted reproduction. The study is focusing on children conceived by donor insemination, egg donation or surrogacy, i.e. who lack a genetic or gestational link with a parent. The coding of data from the 4<sup>th</sup> phase (age 7) of the study has now been completed and data analysis is underway. Lucy, Polly and Jenny were joined this year by Laura Mellish, a psychology student from Sheffield Hallam University,

who took a break from her undergraduate degree to gain experience in family research.

It has been a jet-setting year for the team. In October, they travelled to Brisbane to attend the Annual meeting of the Fertility Society of Australia. Polly delivered a prize-winning presentation “Child development and parent-child relationships in surrogacy, egg donation and donor insemination families at age 7”, Dr Jadva presented findings from the donor sibling study “Offspring searching for their 'donor siblings' and donors: Motivations and Experiences” and Lucy gave a paper based on her MPhil dissertation “The test-tube baby at age 18: parent-child relationships and the psychological wellbeing of adolescents conceived by IVF.” Their next destination was New York in March to be trained by Dr Miriam Steele and Professor Howard Steele at New School University on the coding of measures of parent-child interaction. In April they returned to the United States to present a poster at the Society for Research in Child Development conference in Denver.

We have also been studying a new type of single mother family – single mothers by choice. Dr Jadva, Dr Badger and Professor Golombok carried out an online survey of the motivations and experiences of women who deliberately chose single parenthood, and Dr Badger and Professor Golombok completed a study of young adults raised by single mothers from birth. A new grant from the ESRC (£351,863) has been

awarded to Professor Golombok and Professor Lamb for a study of gay father families. The aim of the study is to obtain empirical data on children raised in gay father families, i.e. to examine families where children actually live, from birth or early infancy, with their gay fathers. The focus will be on the quality of father-child relationships and the psychological development of the child.

Professor Golombok has given a number of papers this year. These include a keynote presentation to the Family and Parenting Institute Annual Conference in London; an invited presentation to the Judicial Studies Board Family Law Seminar; a public lecture at Trinity College, Dublin; an invited presentation to the Lisbon Conference on LGBT anti-discrimination policies; the opening keynote lecture to the British Association for Adoption and Fostering Conference; an invited presentation at the Institute of Education, London; an invited paper to the Swedish Society of Medicine; an invited paper to the Annual Meeting of the Nordic Fertility Society; the opening keynote address at the Shanghai International Forum for Children; and an invited lecture at Peking University. She was also the discussant at a symposium on gay fatherhood at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Child Development and took part in a debate on gamete donation at the Royal Society of Medicine in London.

## Early Social Development

A key achievement for this year has been the progress that the team have made in using advanced statistical modelling methods to analyze data from the Toddlers Up study, resulting in an ESRC evaluation of the end-of-award report as 'outstanding'. Papers have been accepted by several leading journals (see publications list) and presented at this year's meetings of the Society for Research in Child Development and the Developmental Section of the British Psychological Society, as well as at an ESRC workshop on Language, Social Understanding and Developmental Psychopathology. In addition, Gabriela Petrut has begun a PhD on the role of mother-child interaction in the link between maternal depression and children's emotional regulation, both Alex Marks and Martha Hart are in the final stages of their PhD work and Dr Claire Hughes is midway through writing up a book.

Alongside this dissemination work, the team have been busy in the field, collecting data for three new studies: a cross-cultural comparison of social understanding among children in their first year at primary school (the SEAL project); a study of peer relationships, mindreading skills and social anxiety in children in the final year at primary school (the Hopes and Fears project) and an evaluation of an intervention for 10- to 12-year-old children excluded by their classmates (the HeyDaze project). Data-collection for the SEAL project is still underway in the partner countries (Japan, Australia, Italy), so it is too early to

report on study findings. The results from the Hopes and Fears Project were presented at the BPS Developmental meeting by one of our collaborators, Dr Serena Lecce, who is based at the University of Pavia in Italy, and who has been comparing the results from our UK studies with those from parallel studies in Italy. Here, two key findings deserve mention. First, British children show better mindreading skills than their Italian counterparts. Second, British children (aged 10 to 11) report lower levels of social wellbeing than their Italian counterparts. British and Italian children also express somewhat different kinds of worry about the transition to secondary school, with bullying and isolation being a key concern for British children and high work loads being a key concern for Italian children. We plan to follow up these findings by interviewing the children again in the coming year, when they have made the transition to secondary school.

Data collection for the Heydaze project is almost complete. Dr Rosie Ensor and Lauren Allen completed live ratings of young people's prosocial and antisocial behaviours during fortnightly City Council youth groups and collected parents' and children's questionnaire ratings of the children's social adjustment before the youth groups began, at several points throughout the year and after the youth groups ended. Preliminary analyses revealed that as the young people began to engage with their peers, they increasingly included prosocial behaviours into their existing repertoires of predominantly antisocial behaviours. We hope that this research, when complete, will demonstrate the value of community interventions for improving children's relationships with their peers at school.

## **Genetics, Health and Families**

As with much of the research in the Centre, the work of the Genetics, Families and Health group makes important contributions to areas of policy and practice as well as having academic significance. This is true both for established researchers and new PhD students. Gail Ewing's work exemplifies this dual impact with published papers and presentations and also with input to policy forums and service providers. Current government policy is to promote patients' preferences with regards to where they die with death at home an important option. In working with some of the main providers of care at home to dying patients, Gail's work on the support needs of those family carers who play an essential role in allowing a patient to die at home has been widely recognised through her membership of: a Help the Hospices Working Group on Carers' Assessment (which produced national guidance for health professionals on identifying carer needs in the palliative setting); a Carers' Assessment Project Group which reports to the Palliative and End of Life Care Programme Board of the East of England Strategic Health Authority; and an International Task force for Family Carers within the European Association for Palliative Care.

As a result of Helen Statham's research with parents undergoing prenatal diagnosis and with obstetricians making late diagnoses she was asked to contribute to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' working party reviewing professional guidance on Termination of Pregnancy for Fetal

Abnormality. She has been a member of a working group established by the British Association of Perinatal Medicine which has been tasked with drawing up novel guidance on palliative care in the neonatal period and is an Advisor to the organisation Antenatal Results and Choices.

Martin Richards remains as Vice Chair of the UK Biobank Ethics and Governance Council and other activities in the policy field include membership of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority Ethics and Law Committee, and of the Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Human Tissue Management Committee. He was also an active member of the Organising Committee for the Cambridge Darwin Festival in July 2009 which saw huge numbers of people celebrating 200 years since Darwin's birth.

Current research by two PhD students is likely to have importance for future policy and clinical practice. Jenny Prufe is exploring experiences of kidney donation in families where live donation from one parent to a child is an option for consideration as opposed to waiting for a suitable kidney from a deceased donor. Similarly a clear need has been expressed in a number of meetings for the findings of Irene Daly's study of the extent to which women make informed choices to delay childbearing.

As well as this graduate student research, our other health related research has continued in carer support in palliative care (Gail Ewing), perinatal post mortems

and late termination of pregnancy (Helen Statham), Turkish women's experiences of infertility and the use of reproductive technologies (Zeynep Gurtin-Broadbent), identity in patients with depression (Tamara Kayali) and an innovative study in genetics which is Martin Richards' exploration of retail genetics, i.e. personal genome scans.

As well as dissemination through published papers as shown in individuals' summaries, much work has been presented in many international and national conferences and meetings over the last year. Among the highlights, Martin and Zeynep attended a Wellcome History of Medicine workshop entitled 'From Generation to Reproduction' in Ischia, Italy. This intensive and stimulating workshop proved to be an amazing opportunity to develop contacts with scholars interested in reproduction from across the world. Gail presented work at many of the hospice at home services around England where she has worked, as well as at the European Association for Palliative Care in Vienna, and Helen at an International Conference in Frankfurt where the book arising from the European study 'Ethical Dilemmas in Genetic Diagnosis' was launched. Jenny presented findings from her M Phil at an Organ Donation Congress in Berlin; and Irene has presented the early findings of her research in Cambridge.

Members of the group have engaged in many successful collaborations with other research institutions. Gail and Helen both work with service providers and also with other researchers in Manchester and Newcastle respectively. Zeynep



spent time on an ESRC Overseas University Visit as a Visiting Scholar at the European Ethnology Department of Humboldt University, in Berlin, Germany. Martin was a Visiting Fellow at the ESRC Genomics Forum in Edinburgh.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Lucy Blake

Golombok, S., Owen, L., Blake, L., Murray, C. & Jadva, V. (2009). Parent-child relationships and the psychological well-being of 18-year-old adolescents conceived by in vitro fertilisation. *Human Fertility*, 1742-8149, 12 (2), 63-72

### Dr Rosie Ensor

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### **Dr Gail Ewing**

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### **Dr Tabitha Freeman**

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### **Humera Iqbal**

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### **Dr Vasanti Jadva**

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### **Alex Marks**

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### **Professor Martin Richards**

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## **Dr Claire Snowdon**

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## **Helen Statham**

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Graham, R., Rankin, J., Statham, H. & Robson, S. (2008). Provision of late termination of pregnancy and feticide: results from a survey of UK fetal medicine consultants (Abstract). *Archives of Disease in Childhood Fetal Neonatal* 93(suppl 1): Fa40.

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## **Current Grants held by CFR members**

### **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: Dimbleby Foundation

Period: January 2009 – April 2010

Amount: £38,859

### **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: £358,310

### **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: £58,000

### **XJAG/034**

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok (PI), Professor John Rust & Dr Tim Croudace

Investigator: Dr Jon Heron

Title: Psychometric statistics and measurement bias

Sponsor: ESRC

Period: January 2008 – September 2009

Amount: £98,351

**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/032**

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok  
Investigator: Dr Liz Chapman  
Title: Project Silk II  
Sponsor: SSL International  
Period: September 2007 – December 2009  
Amount: £150,000  
Donation to CFR: £75,000

**XJAG/031**

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: Isaac Newton Trust  
Period: April 2007 – December 2009  
Amount: £108,536

**XJAG/023**

Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok  
Investigator: Dr Tabitha Freeman.  
Title: Adolescents conceived by donor insemination.  
Sponsor: The Nuffield Foundation  
Period: April 2006 – June 2010  
Amount: £120,000