**StrongWomen: A Strength Training Program**

StrongWomen is a simple, safe, and effective strength-based and nutrition education program for mid-life and older women who are interested in improving their health, vitality and well-being. Women who participate regularly may increase their bone density and muscle mass while becoming stronger, more energized, and more active. StrongWomen sections are offered at sites near University Park and the Penn State Hershey Medical Center. For more information, visit app.outreach.psu.edu/extension/newsletter/september/Osteoporosis.htm.

To register for an upcoming session in the University Park area visit www.ohr.psu.edu/HealthMatters or call 814-865-3085. To register for an upcoming session in the Hershey area visit www.hmc.psu.edu/ufc/ or call 717-531-7075.

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**Update on PSIDO Research: Exercise and Pregnancy**

Gestational Diabetes (GD) is one of the most common complications of pregnancy. Women diagnosed with GD face a 40 to 60 percent chance of developing Type 2 diabetes within ten years. Exercise is an important part of any woman’s diabetes management plan. Recently, Dr. Danielle Symons Downs conducted a study of exercise beliefs in women with GD during pregnancy and after delivery. Twenty-eight women with GD living in Central Pennsylvania participated in this survey study.

The results showed that motivations for exercise differed. During pregnancy, exercise was viewed as most important for controlling blood glucose levels. After the baby was born, respondents viewed exercise as most important for personal weight control. Interestingly, the study further found that women's spouses/partners most strongly influenced their exercise frequency.

These results are important for developing successful interventions to motivate women with a history of GD to exercise during pregnancy and postpartum. An article further describing these results and their implications has been published in Diabetes Care, the research journal of the American Diabetes Association.

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**PSIDO Research Volunteer Database**

If the studies listed in this newsletter do not interest you, consider enrolling in the PSIDO Database. This database is used to provide diabetes investigators with contact information for persons interested in participating in diabetes-related research studies. Signing up for the database will allow investigators to contact you directly with information about studies such as the ones described above, but does not obligate you to participate. For more information, contact 1-800-393-0782 or luk10@psu.edu. You can also call this number if you are not sure about participating in one of the studies described in this newsletter. IRB # 20657; PI: K. Peters

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**The Diabetes Playbook Receives Patient Education Award**

This month, *The Diabetes Playbook* was honored with an award from the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) as an original, outstanding, and effective patient education tool. *The Diabetes Playbook* is a patient-friendly book to help patients with diabetes better understand and manage their condition.

*The Diabetes Playbook* was developed and supported by Penn State Hershey and philanthropic contributions, including proceeds from the Penn State Diabetes Gala. The *Diabetes Playbook* compiles, in an easy to read and reference fashion, advice and tips of patients, family members, Penn State/Hershey clinical staff, and other experts. Over 4,000 hard copies of *The Diabetes Playbook* have been distributed since 2006, and many more “soft copies” have been downloaded from the Penn State Institute for Diabetes and Obesity Web site. You may order your own hard copy or download a copy by going to www.hmc.psu.edu/diabetes/resources/playbook.html.

A study is being done at some of the University Physician Group clinics in order to gain insight on how best to use *The Diabetes Playbook* as a patient education tool. Patients with diabetes at some University Physician Group clinics in the Hershey/Harrisburg area are being offered the opportunity to participate in this study.

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Spotlight on PSIDO Member: Danielle Symons Downs, PhD

Dr. Danielle Symons Downs received her undergraduate degree from Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio. Following her master’s work in Applied Behavior Change at the State University of New York at Brockport, Dr. Downs conducted her doctoral work at the University of Florida in Health and Human Performance, specializing in Exercise and Sport Psychology. She is currently an associate professor of kinesiology and obstetrics and gynecology at Penn State. Dr. Downs’ research focuses on understanding the motivational determinants of exercise among women during pregnancy and postpartum, particularly those with gestational diabetes.

Downs says, "Before I was a mom, I ran marathons and trained whenever I wanted. I had always been an athlete and exercise was a habit. Once I became a mom, I experienced first hand how one’s motivation to exercise can go out the window, as the children are the first priority. Now it’s a bit more challenging to find the balance - my runs are timed around my children’s schedules – before they wake or during nap time, which also means there is very little “down time” these days!"

Building on her own experience and the results of published work, Dr. Downs has developed two research projects (See Active MOMS and BEAP in the Ongoing Research Studies), the goals of which are to identify and implement innovative interventions to facilitate exercise promotion and maintenance during pregnancy and postpartum. “Because women with gestational diabetes are at an increased risk for developing Type 2 Diabetes later in life, getting and keeping these women active is vital for their long term health and well-being.”

Ongoing PSIDO Research Studies

Volunteers are needed for the following research studies. All studies listed have been approved by either the University Park or Penn State/Hershey Medical Center Institutional Review Board.

**Type 1 Diabetes TrialNet**

Type 1 Diabetes TrialNet is an international research study that screens relatives of people with type 1 diabetes to assess their risk for developing diabetes. Relatives (ages 1-45) may be eligible to be screened with one blood test at no cost. This study is aimed at tracking the development of diabetes and in the future. The study will include experimental diabetes prevention treatments. For more information, contact 800-393-0782 or beap@psu.edu.

IRB# 18620; PI: J.S. Ulbrecht.

**BEAP (Beliefs about Exercise after Pregnancy)**

BEAP (Beliefs about Exercise after Pregnancy) is a PSIDO-funded research study targeting postpartum women who had gestational diabetes in their most recent pregnancy. The study’s objective is to better understand a woman’s thoughts about exercise and other healthy behaviors in order to develop an intervention program. Compensation is provided. For more information, contact dsd11@psu.edu or 814-863-0456. IRB# 23986; PI: D. Downs.

**PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome)**

Women with menstrual irregularities and excess hair may have PCOS and be at risk for diabetes. If you are 18 to 40 years old and have PCOS, you may be eligible for one of two research studies. In one we are investigating the benefits of a cholesterol-lowering drug in people with PCOS. Compensation is provided. For more information, contact 717-531-1540 or seyer@psu.edu. IRB# 26562; PI: J.S. Ulbrecht.

**Endometrial Hyperplasia Study**

Post-menopausal women, ages 45 to 75, who are overweight and have diabetes and/or high blood pressure may qualify for this research study. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of endometrial cancer screening tests in women with certain risk factors. This research involves one study visit and compensation is provided. For more information, contact 717-531-1540 or seyer@psu.edu. IRB# 20175; PI: R.S. Legro.

**Active MOMS**

Active MOMS is an NIDDK funded research study targeting pregnant women diagnosed with gestational diabetes. The study purpose is to examine physical activity, health beliefs, and behaviors during pregnancy in an effort to understand the impact on gestational diabetes for women and their babies.

Women may be randomized to a standard of care, leisure physical activity, or structured exercise condition in pregnancy. Compensation is provided. For more information, contact dsd11@psu.edu or 814-863-0456. IRB# 24474; PI: D. Downs.

Evaluating Retinal Function in Patients with and without Diabetes. This observational research study is seeking both healthy volunteers and volunteers with a history of diabetes for at least seven years with and without diabetic retinopathy. The study will evaluate several vision tests designed to reveal whether decreased visual function may be used as an identifier in future studies aimed at early diabetic disease. Eligible volunteers will have two visits within three weeks, lasting two to three hours each, provide medical and eye history, and complete various visual function tests. Compensation is available. For more information, contact Laura Walter at 717-531-4696 or lwalter@psu.edu. IRB# 25461EP; PI: G. Jackson.

Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy Study: Adults who have diabetes and have proliferative diabetic retinopathy are sought for a one-year study to determine if decreased vision due to proliferative diabetic retinopathy can be prevented. All eligible participants will receive laser treatments and some participants will also receive study medication in the eye. All participants must be available for approximately six study-related visits at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center. Compensation is available for travel expenses. For more information, contact schobanoj@psu.edu or 717-531-3790. IRB# 25235; PI: K. Neely.