

# *Penn Center for* Women's Behavioral Wellness

Spring 2012 Newsletter

## A Letter from the Director



C. Neill Epperson, M.D.

As Director of the Penn Center for Women's Behavioral Wellness (PCWBW), it is my pleasure to introduce the inaugural issue of the PCWBW Newsletter. We hope this quarterly editorial will be welcome and informative for those of you with a special interest in women's behavioral wellness. At the PCWBW, we provide state-of-the art behavioral health care for women across the life-span, from conception through the post menopausal years. An important

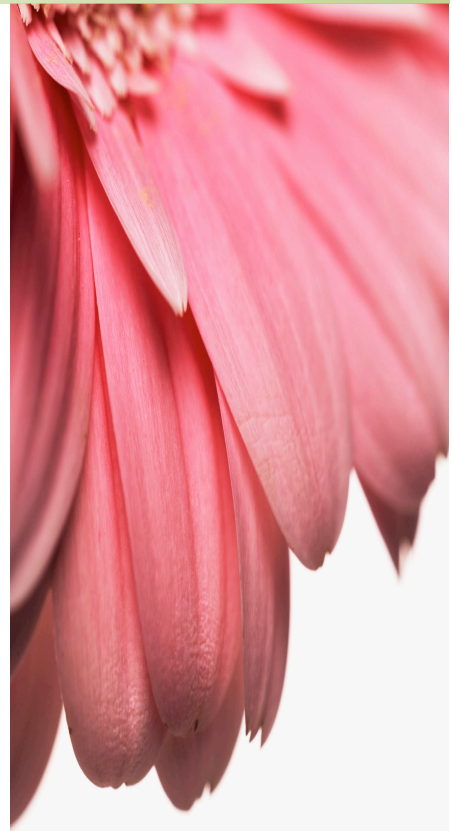
goal of the Center is to serve as a conduit of new knowledge in the field of women's health as it pertains to behavioral wellness in specific. The purpose of our newsletter is to summarize the most important new research findings in women's health from our group here at Penn, as well as from our colleagues around the world, and translate why these findings are important clinically.

Now more than ever it is important to highlight the need to explore women's health conditions and the ongoing relevant research in this growing field. The prevalence and clinical presentation of many disorders affecting humans differs by sex. Yet, many health care providers and researchers continue to be unaware of how hormones and sex, individually and together, impact the care of women or research outcomes. By promoting women's wellness through education, clinical care and research that broadens knowledge of how hormones and sex contribute to women's health, we will be able to build a healthier future for the generations of women to come.

Best wishes for a healthy and productive spring.

Regards,

*C. Neill Epperson, M.D.*

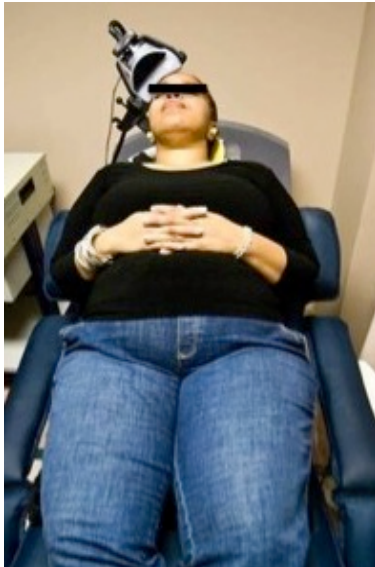


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## The Research Corner: Spot Light on Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation

Depression during pregnancy can have significant adverse effects on the mother and her unborn child. The depression can affect the pregnancy directly and make it difficult for women to care properly for themselves. Despite significant advances in the treatment of depression through the utilization of antidepressants, pregnant women prefer to avoid medications when at all possible. In response to this unmet need, Dr. Deborah Kim is studying Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) as a non-systemic & non-invasive treatment option. This innovative treatment uses electromagnetic induction to excite neurons in the region of the brain believed to be involved in depression and mood control. Once neurons have been stimulated they communicate more effectively, and effective neuron communication has been shown to lead to the lessening of depressive symptoms.



A patient receives TMS treatment from Dr. Kim.

The FDA has approved TMS for the treatment of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), and Dr. Kim has pioneered the use of TMS to treat depression in pregnancy. Dr. Kim completed a pilot study in 2010 of 10 pregnant women suffering from MDD and is now embarking on a 66 participant double-blind, placebo trial of TMS efficacy treating depression in pregnancy. In the pilot study, all women completed the treatment and the only common side effect was a mild, transient headache. All of the babies were born healthy. The treatment requires that subjects come in daily (Monday thru Friday) for approximately four weeks. It is Dr. Kim's hope that one day pregnant women suffering from depression will have access to a treatment option that they feel comfortable with for both themselves and their baby.



Deborah Kim, M.D.

*“In the pilot study, all women completed the treatment and all babies were born healthy.”*

**FAQ...How Do I Get Involved in Research?**

**A: Contact one of our Clinical Research Coordinators**

[http://www.med.upenn.edu/womenswellness/studies\\_pregnancy.html](http://www.med.upenn.edu/womenswellness/studies_pregnancy.html)

**For TMS call Lisa at  
215-573-8880**

## PCWBW in the News



In a recent interview with *NBC 10 News*, The PCWBW's Perinatal Director, Dr. Kim, and a recent study participant spoke about the effects of TMS for depression and pregnancy. Dr. Kim explained how the treatment works and the participant explained her experience with depression and her outcomes from her study participation.



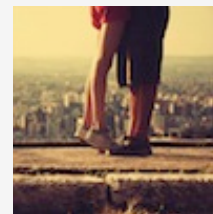
In new findings, researchers studied more than 200 moms for signs of depression and checked the babies to see how well they were developing. In an interview with *WHYY Newsworks*, Dr. Epperson says she is concerned that women who are depressed during pregnancy might interpret this latest study to mean that they shouldn't receive treatment after the baby is born.



Did you know some women are taking pills made from their own dried placenta after giving birth in the hopes of preventing postpartum depression (PPD)? Dr. Kim addresses this phenomenon, noting that there are no scientific studies supporting placenta consumption as a preventative for PPD. Dr. Kim fears that women will take placenta pills instead of seeking treatment with a postpartum depression expert.



Dr. Epperson and Dr. Lily Arya, Associate Professor and Chief of Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania, spoke in Palm Beach, Florida, this past February regarding urinary incontinence in women. Drs. Epperson and Arya spoke not only about the negative effects and potential causes, but also about different routes of treatment for those suffering from this condition.



Dr. Mike of the *Fox News Network* featured Dr. Epperson on his show to discuss decreased libido, or a condition called Low Sex Drive, which affects 4 out of 10 women. Dr. Epperson discussed how hormonal changes due to child birth or menopause, in addition to life stress, can lead to loss of libido.

To read full articles or view interviews, go to:  
<http://www.med.upenn.edu/womenswellness/news.html>

# Current Research Studies @ PCWBW

## Female Smokers Needed



Penn Medicine is recruiting women who smoke cigarettes to participate in a brain imaging research study.

- Are you:
- 18-50 years old and in good health?
  - smoke at least 10 cigarettes per day
  - NOT on birth control pills
  - NOT on medication for depression, anxiety or sleep problems?

If so, you may qualify for a research study that includes brain imaging, blood draws and questionnaires.

Participants will be compensated for their time.

Call Claudia: 215-41-STUDY

Email: [sclaud@upenn.edu](mailto:sclaud@upenn.edu)



**Penn Medicine**

## Are you a MENOPAUSAL woman?

Are you having trouble remembering things, focusing or concentrating?



You may qualify for a new research study if:

- Your last menstrual **period** was within the last 5 years
- You are **medically healthy**
- Do not have **ADHD**
- Have no recent history of **drug abuse**
- Experience **mild to moderate difficulties with memory, attention, concentration, & focus**
- Are **NOT** on hormone replacement therapy or birth control pills

Participation will include taking a medication, computer testing, & blood draws.

Participants will be compensated for their time.



For more information, please call:

**215-573-8884**



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## Are you a MENOPAUSAL woman?

Are you **right-handed, a non-smoker** and interested in trying **estrogen**?



If so, you may qualify for a **research study**, funded by the **National Institute of Health**.

Eligible participants will try **estrogen** for 8 - 10 weeks in order to help us examine it's effect on brain functioning and memory.

Study visits will also include:

- A physical exam
- Blood draws
- Cognitive testing
- Brain imaging

Participants will be compensated for their time

For more information please call:  
**215-41-STUDY**



**Penn Medicine**

## Are you Pregnant And Feeling Sad, Blue Or Down In The Dumps?

The Penn Center for Women's Behavioral Wellness is recruiting pregnant women for a research study using a magnetic device that may help pregnant women suffering from depression.

\*Eligible women are between the ages of 18 and 39 years old and between 14 to 34 weeks pregnant.\*

Participants will be compensated for their time.

Please call Lisa today for more information at

**(215) 573-8880**



**Penn Medicine**

## Penn Center for Women's Behavioral Wellness

Our team of expert clinicians take the lifespan approach to women's behavioral wellness

The PCWBW provides clinical consultations regarding:

- psychotropic medications in pregnancy
- postpartum and antepartum depression and anxiety
- mood disorders specific to the menstrual cycle & menopausal transition



Our clinicians provide the option for ongoing management of psychological or psychiatric care using a full range of therapeutic options. We also work closely with referring physicians to design the best treatment plan for each individual.



Dr. C. Neill Epperson, a leading expert on women's mental health issues, directs an accomplished group of psychiatrists, psychologists, and administrative and research personnel.

The PCWBW is conveniently located in both University City and Center City Philadelphia (Washington Square West)

**215-573-8886**

<http://www.med.upenn.edu/womenswellness/>



**Perelman School of Medicine**  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

For the Menopause Brain Imaging Study  
Call Claudia:  
**215-41-STUDY**

For the Menopause and Memory Study  
Call Jeanette:  
**215-573-8884**

For the TMS Depression and Pregnancy Study  
Call Lisa:  
**215-573-8880**

For the Male and Female Smoking Study  
Call Claudia:  
**215-41-STUDY**