

The Center for Women's Health Studies and Promotion

Annual Report 2021

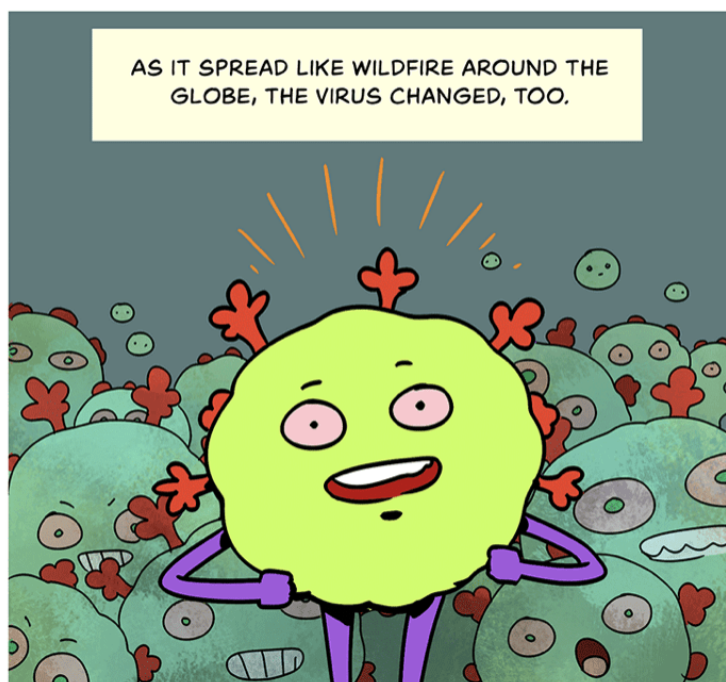
Submitted by Prof. Julie Cwikel

Founder and Director

A year of three community health-promotion events with the Beer Sheva Municipality



That was the year that was – COVID19 is now COVID2022



We will all remember 2021 as the year that we spent adapting to COVID19, which refused to go away. The year began with a very sharp decrease in face-to-face interactions and meetings both professionally and personally, and proceeded to challenge us how to maintain essential services and research, and included adapting to teaching and meeting by ZOOM. Sadly, it also included a big dose of worry over family and friends who became ill with COVID19 and included mourning friends and family who passed away this year from the pandemic. BGU President, **Prof. Danny Chamovitz** became critically ill with COVID19 in September of 2021 and thankfully recovered.



We are very pleased to be joined by Mrs. Sigal Saban Balaila, the new Administrative Coordinator at the Center. Coming from years of experience in social activism for women and administration in BGU, she is replacing Ms. Mazal Tahar, who is following her academic training and going into education in the area of tourism.

We are delighted to welcome to the Center Revital Cohen, RN, MSW, who was a volunteer in Mom to Mom, and now the new M2M coordinator, taking over from Ms. Ilana Schmidt, who is now a M2M supervisor for both M2M in the Jewish and Bedouin sectors.



Ms. Revital Cohen



Ms. Ada Azbarga, comes from a background in psychology and works part-time in psychiatric rehabilitation in Rahat. She joins as a M2M Coordinator in the Bedouin sector, supervised by Dr. Samira Alfayumi-Zeadna.

Following the sage advice to enjoy and celebrate as much as possible, especially in these trying and difficult times... we want to congratulate:

Prof. Aya Biderman who was promoted to Full Professor!

Dr. Nuha Sliman who finished her PhD.

Mazal tov, mabruk and congratulations to them both!



Prof. Aya Biderman



Dr. Nuha Sliman

New Research:

COVANA (Combined Voice and Narrative Aalysis for rapid mental health diagnosis) :

Prof. Julie Cwikel (psychiatric epidemiology), Dr. Dan Vilenchik (Machine Learning and Computer Engineering), Dr. Alison Stern Perez (Psycholinguistics), Mr. Ruslan Sergienko (Data Management), and Ms. Rachel Abramovitz (Data Collection)

The goal of this project is to employ machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) techniques developed by Dr. Dan Vilenchik and natural language programming (NLP) techniques for narrative analysis developed by Dr. Perez, in concert, to detect psychopathology and physical health problems such as chronic pain. While not specifically addressing women's health, the psychiatric epidemiology indicates that women have higher symptom levels of most mental health diagnoses (e.g. depression and anxiety) and present with more symptoms of e.g. chronic pain.

While initially we collected data on medical staff dealing with COVID19, we have expanded our sample to include community-dwelling persons coping with COVID, chronic pain patients and those currently in psychotherapy treatment. We are now analyzing data derived from voice recordings, narratives and questionnaires collected by our team. The successful accomplishment of this task hinges upon the availability of a large amount of high-quality data which is correctly labeled as having mental health psychopathology (or not). We are in the process of establishing a semi-automatic method of collecting the data we need. We hope to establish a first-of-its-kind, large, high-quality dataset of Hebrew-speaking voice recordings and narratives on which the ML and NLP techniques will be trained with sufficient accuracy to meet the stringent requirements of real-world applications.

COVANA started when Prof. Danny Chamovitz decided to convene the BGU Coronavirus Task Force in March 2020 “to harness the university’s brainpower and ingenuity” to divert old research initiatives into new COVID19-focused research. Sixty researchers from all the faculties came together and presented ideas and brainstormed. One-page proposals were submitted and 24 research projects were funded within two weeks. Many different innovations and publications came from this, See <https://bgu.digitaler.co.il/BenGurion-corona/8/> (page 22) (note Cwikel is misspelled in English).

Chernobyl effects on women, men and children, 35 years later

The worst environmental disaster of the twentieth century occurred over 35 years ago, when in the early morning hours of April 26th, 1986, the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl exploded, blowing off the 1000-ton concrete roof and dispersing radioactive particles all over Europe. This constituted the "largest short-term release from a single source of radioactive materials to the atmosphere ever recorded". In 1991, Prof. Michael Quastel and colleagues conducted whole-body counts for radioactive cesium isotopes (^{137}Cs) and physical exams on a sample of 723 adults and 300 children (aged 0 to 16 at the time of the accident), who had immigrated to Israel from areas in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) affected by the Chernobyl accident.

Now years after this "natural experiment", we are examining the chronic health effects in general among women and men who have been exposed to low-levels of ionizing radiation from Chernobyl. Using hospitalization data from Soroka University Hospital, we compared the rates of hospitalizations between highly exposed, and low level exposures of men and women from the exposed areas, with non-exposed immigrants from other areas of FSU, immigrants from other countries (e.g. North and

South America, Western Europe, North African/Asia, Ethiopia), and native-born Israelis. This study was published in the Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health with the collaboration of Prof. Eyal Sheiner and biostatistician, Ruslan Sergienko, Dr. Danna Slusky and Prof. Michael Quastel.

Two additional papers are in the works from this study: 1) an analysis of the mortality data from this study led by Dr. Danna Slusky and a qualitative analysis of the reproductive experiences of children exposed to the Chernobyl accident as young girls, led by Dr. Alison Stern Perez.

CB-ART (cognitive behavioral and art-based interventions), collaborative research with Monash University in perinatal mental health

This clinical intervention which combines between cognitive behavioral and art based therapy methods, has been the source of a number of publications with Prof. Ephrat Huss, Prof. Orly Sarid & Prof. Julie Cwikel. Two years ago, we completed a project funded by the Pratt Foundation through a special BGU-Monash University grant initiative. Our colleagues from the Monash University, Prof. Jane Fisher and Dr. Heather Rowe of the Jeanne Haile Research Center replicated our CBART protocol in Melbourne to reduce perinatal depression and anxiety. We have written an evaluation of their workbook-based protocol, called WAWA (Why Are We Anxious?) with 34 new mothers, working to ease common anxieties that present during pregnancy and in the post-partum period. Our former PhD student, Dr. Meital Simhi, now on post-doc in Boston conducted the study in the field. Our analyses show that the WAWA workbook intervention is very effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety, stress and depression in the post-partum period and very acceptable to the mothers who participated. A paper was published in the Special Issue of the Journal of Clinical Medicine, focusing on Perinatal Mental Health and Women's Health, with Prof. Julie Cwikel as guest editor. The paper entitled "A cognitive-behavioral intervention for postpartum anxiety and depression: Individual phone vs group format" authored by Meital Simhi, Orly Sarid, Heather Rowe, Jane Fisher and Julie Cwikel showed that both formats were effective in promoting mental health among postpartum mothers, in a one group, pre-post-test research design.

An additional paper, written by **Dr. Hilary Brown**, and the rest of the Monash-BGU research group, is a mixed-method evaluation of the adaptation of our CB-ART intervention. Entitled "**A Cognitive Behavioural Art Intervention program – CBART – a pilot study in an early parenting centre**" is in the last stages before submission. The authors are: **Dr. Hilary Brown, Prof. Jane Fisher, Prof. Julie Cwikel, Prof. Orly Sarid, and Dr. Heather Rowe**, of BGU and Monash University

The Myriam de Senarclens Prize -CB-ART: The Reduction of Psychological Stress and its Physiological Correlates among Women Undergoing In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)

The CB-ART project with women undergoing IVF study was funded by the **Senarclens** prize and has completed data collection. The research group, **Dr. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen, Prof. Orly Sarid, Prof. Julie Cwikel & Dr. Iris Har-Vardi**, received funds from the **Myriam de Senarclens Foundation** to conduct a randomized controlled trial of a CB-ART intervention with 100 women with elevated perceived stress, before undergoing IVF treatment; in order to examine its effect on perceived stress, plasma CFD, telomere length and pregnancy rates. Eighty-eight (N=88) IVF patients were recruited, and 35 participants with elevated stress were randomized to a CB-ART intervention that included relaxation and art making or a “treatment as usual” control group. We found several correlations between psychological and physiological measures as well as between cytokines and telomere length. CBART is an acceptable intervention that may reduce stress and improve the health of IVF patients. A MA student is currently writing her thesis on the biological effects of the intervention. Manuscript preparation should shortly ensue.

A multidisciplinary study on the use of art as a method of stress assessment using different methods of drawing

The Technology-ART study and the preliminary analyses have been completed. Forty-eight women, fluent in Hebrew, were recruited to participate in an experiment tailored to examine the psychological and physiological differences in stress reduction through art-making. They were randomly assigned to draw with oil pastels on paper or on a 12-Inch iPad Pro with the Art-Rage program. Before doing the drawing, participants' stress levels were raised by doing the "sing a song" stress test. Heart rate variability was measured throughout the experiment and two salivary samples for cortisol were taken: one at the beginning of the experiment as a baseline and the second after 45 minutes of art-making.

We are still reanalyzing data and we hope to submit manuscripts later next year. We have submitted an abstract and hope to be presenting our finding at the 2022 American Psychosomatic Society annual conference. The collaborating researchers are: **Dr. Johanna Czamanski-Cohen** (University of Haifa), **Prof. Julie Cwikel** and **Prof. Orly Sarid** (The Center for Women's Health Studies and Promotion, BGU), and **Dr. Giora Galili** (Open University). This is supported by a grant from a private donor.

PhD graduates taking leadership roles in practice and teaching in the Negev

Dr. Nirit Volk: Nirit finished her thesis two years ago, on “The helping connection: how mothers of daughters who were sexually abused experience the relationship to their daughter's therapist”. She was supervised by **Prof. Julie Cwikel**. She is now the director of clinical services in Maslan (The Negev's Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Support Center). We continue to collaborate on helping women with complex trauma who are in need of specialized services and long-term therapy. She has joined the teaching staff of the BGU Spitzer Department of Social Work.

Dr. Svetlana Prokashev is now the director of the School Psychological Services in Omer and is an advisor on the thesis of Ms. Merav Daniel who is working with women with breast cancer. In addition, she teaches CBT in the Spitzer Department of Social Work.

Dr. Efrat Cohen-Noyman has launched into full-time clinical work, with a private clinic specializing in treating women with eating disorders and women who have a complex trauma history. She is also lecturing at BGU as a guest lecturer.

Dr. Shimrit Engelsman is a lecturer at Sapir College and is in charge of the clinical services of ? She has published three articles from her thesis on Haredi women coping with frequent births and high fertility (one in English and two in Hebrew).

Dr. Yael Damri has opened up a private clinic in Beer Sheva and is still in charge of mental health services for the communities of Har Hevron. She is working on a paper from her thesis.

New PhD Graduates

Ms. Nuha Sliman finished her Phd thesis entitled “The effect of family structure on children's morbidity in the first year of life in Arab society”. Jointly supervised by Prof. Jonathan Anson and Prof. Julie Cwikel. During her thesis research, she was not only productive but reproductive, becoming the mother to additional two children. Mazal tov and Mabruk!



Post-doctoral fellow with Prof. Julie Cwikel:

Dr. Alison Stern Perez – Dr. Perez developed the Narrative Method for Assessment of Psychosocial Processing (NMAPP) as a tool to allow a detailed qualitative analysis of narrated traumatic events. She is validating her findings with a set of birth narratives from three time points (at birth, at one and four months), collected by **Dr. Tahli Frenkel** of the Interdisciplinary Center in Hertzlia. In addition, she taught a 3rd year research seminar with Prof. Cwikel on **mixed method research**.

Dr. Alison Stern Perez is now in the final stages of completing her second year of her post-doctoral fellowship under **Prof. Julie Cwikel**, with the financial backing of the **Prof. Yuval Neeman Scholarship**. She is using the NMAPP analysis tool, which involves a mixed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the narratives, with a three-pronged focus on: 1) the use of pronouns; 2) the use of tenses; and 3) the use of mechanisms of narrative selection. This focus provides a wider view of the position and prominence of the narrative of the emotionally charged experience within the individual's larger worldview.

Alison has found a number of linguistic and extra-linguistic markers in the women's birth narratives that appear to reflect acute distress and/or foreshadow a potential to develop symptoms of depression and/or post-traumatic stress. Ultimately, Alison has found that the content and form of these very short narratives are reflective of the inner world of the narrator, and this may offer great potential for early diagnosis of myriad psychological symptoms of distress after stressful or potentially traumatic events.

New PhD students prepare their thesis proposals:

Joining our research team under the supervision of **Dr. Perez** and **Prof. Cwikel** are two new Phd students: **Shani Vichinski-Tanneboim** (comparing the birth narratives of prima versus multipara mothers) and **Noa Shviger** (comparison of the birth narratives of mothers with c-section and vaginal deliveries). Both have almost finished their thesis proposals and are now starting data analysis.

Continuing PHD Students

Liat Hoffer: has submitted her thesis on “The psychosocial outcomes of hair loss resulting from childhood irradiation for tinea capitis” and it is under review. Her thesis supervisors are: **Prof. Dorit Segal-Engelchin** and **Prof. Shifra Shvarts**.

Alex Davidov: "Neurofeedback training as a tool that contributes to function and regulation of the emotions under stress among Israeli soldiers in IDF" supervised by **Prof. Julie Cwikel** and **Prof. Talma Hendler**, Tel Aviv University, Sackler Medical School. Alex finished writing his thesis and is now in the process of making corrections and adding final changes.

Lior Deray: Supervised by **Prof. Julie Cwikel**. Her topic: adjustment of soldiers in combat support roles: effect of background variables, coping strategies, gender and unit atmosphere on drop-out. She completed the data collection for this study and is now beginning her data analysis. This research is taking place in the IDF mental health unit. Lior has finished collecting her data and is now starting data analysis and the write up of her results.

Merav Daniel: Merav is an educational psychologist who is testing of a cognitive-behavioral protocol to promote the return to work of women recovering from breast cancer. She is being jointly supervised by **Prof. Julie Cwikel**, **Dr. Ofer Edelstein** and **Dr. Svetlana Prokashev**. She has now completed the piloting of her intervention protocol and is conducting the trial with women, using ZOOM.

Medical Student

Ms. Batya Montag, a medical student at Hebrew University is studying the factors influencing the return of new mothers to work following maternity leave. She is being jointly supervised by **Prof. Cwikel** and her colleague, **Dr. Lilah Rinsky Halivni, an occupational physician** from Hebrew University Medical School. She completed her data collection and is now starting data analysis and writing up her thesis.

Community Activities: Mom to Mom

Background on Mom to Mom (M2M)

M2M is an empirically tested project designed to help new mothers cope with the first challenging year of parenting through home visits of volunteer mothers and/or personal connections (by home visit, phone or ZOOM) with a professional M2M coordinators, who specialize in the area of perinatal mental health and post-partum health promotion.

Prof. Julie Cwikel oversees the project. Prof. Cwikel brought M2M to the Negev in 2004-2005, with the supervision of the M2M Israel founder, **Prof. Marsha Kaitz** of Hebrew University, who founded M2M in Jerusalem and its environs (see <https://www.emlem.co.il/>).

Prof. Kaitz learned the evidence-based model from the M2M founders, who are senior staff at Jewish Family and in the Boston, MA, USA and brought it to Israel in 2000 (see <https://www.jfcsboston.org/Our-Services/Center-for-Early-Relationship-Support/Lauren-Mark-Rubin-Visiting-Moms>).

The staff members are **Ms. Ilana Schmidt, Ms. Limor Niego, Ms. Revital Cohen, Dr. Samira Alfeumi-Zeadna** and **Ms. Ada Azbarga**

Mom to Mom is now completing its 16th year, providing support for new mothers and their infants in Beer-Sheva and the Negev. "Mom to Mom" is a project designed to help mothers cope with the first year of parenting guidance by skilled mental health coordinators, **Ms. Ilana Schmidt & Ms. Revital Cohen**, who are recruiting and training volunteer mothers to make home visits and provide telephone contact. The aim is to provide support and guidance to mothers of the Negev who feel that they lack adequate support to make the transition smoothly. This year, as we struggled through the third and fourth waves of COVID19, new mothers continued to be challenged as lock-down restrictions. For this reason, over 2021, we continued to provide support to new mothers, by telephone, Whatsapp and ZOOM when personal meetings were not allowed. In addition, our volunteer training and supervision primarily moved to ZOOM meetings.

We have two new staff members this year, who are both still in training. **Ms. Revital Cohen** is a nurse who retrained in the Spitzer Department of Social Work as an MSW social worker. As part of her studies, she volunteered in M2M and was recently recruited to replace Ms. Ilana Schmidt who will be continuing as a senior supervisor of both the Jewish and Bedouin sector M2M projects.

Since the beginning of 2021, we have provided support to an additional 40 new mothers, who joined either the on-line groups or were matched with a volunteer. At any given time, we have around 30 volunteer-new mother pairs who work together. All volunteers are carefully supervised by our two coordinators.

Since the beginning of the project, we have helped over 850 new mothers adjust to parenthood in the first critical year of life and trained around 275 volunteers, many of whom have worked with us for years. The volunteers meet monthly with the coordinators and receive training and enrichment activities. Here is a table summarizing this year's activities:

How did they use M2M services?

Where the referral came from:	Started in M2M Home Visiting by Volunteer or Staff	Started in M2M Mother's Group	Received Telephone Counseling	Declined M2M	Total
Soroka Medical Center (Nurse Simha Dror)	12	-	8	10	30
Social worker (Soroka, Health Services) or other mental health prof.	11	-	4	-	19

Other perinatal professional (e.g. Tipat Halav)	9	-	3	-	9 (received both services)
Self-referral	4	-	4	-	4 (received both services)
Recruited by Positive Parenting Website	2	22	4	-	22 (received multiple services)
Total	38	22	23	10	93

This year, one of our senior volunteers, **Ms. Hadassah Damari**, was granted the Shield of the Beer Sheva Municipality for outstanding volunteering. She was given this great honor at a festive ceremony on the 8th of December. This year she has been volunteering with a family where triplets were born in a family with two other children, all under age three.



Ms. Hadasa Damari with Mr. Rubik Danilovitz, the Mayor of Beer-Shava and the prize committee

This year M2M was in the NEWS!!! Articles on M2M were published in a local newspaper as well as in the **Haaretz** and in a popular women's health forum **Nemarot** (Lady Tigers) on women's health. <https://www.nemerot.org/post/em-le-em....> Congratulations to **Ilana Schmidt** for getting M2M into the popular press.

This year we expanded the reach of Mom to Mom to include a special out-reach project into the Bedouin community headed by our intrepid post-doctoral fellow, **Dr. Samira Alfeumi-Zeadna**. We have received two grants, one from the **Two Lilies Foundation from Denver, Colorado** and one from **Keren Briah** from Israel in order to expand the reach of Mom to Mom into the Bedouin community. We have translated many of the **Mom to Mom** materials into Arabic [Mom to Mom-Arabic \(follow link here\)](#) . Just recently, we were delighted to learn that **Dr. Samira Alfayumi-Zeadna** was granted a personal post-doctoral fellowship to support her continued work, on research and on this project, by an anonymous donor from Canada.

Mom to Mom in the Bedouin community of the Negev

M2M into the Bedouin community in the Negev is now completing its first year. We aimed to create an accessible and culturally sensitive service for Bedouin mothers in the Negev that allows them to access professional support, to ease the transition to new parenthood in the complicated social context that Bedouin women face in this period. We provide support and guidance for new Bedouin mothers and their infants up to one-year post-partum to prevent or identify post-partum depression and bolster their mothering skills.

The project coordinators and staff member for M2M in the Bedouin community: **Dr. Samira Alfayumi-Zeadna**, who joined M2M in November of 2020, and is now working as the senior coordinator of M2M and the supervisor of **Ms. Ada Azbarga**, who joined the **M2M-Bedouin** project in September of 2021. Both are experienced in perinatal health and working with the health and emotional issues among Bedouin women.

Dr. Samira Alfayumi-Zeadna is a senior clinical nurse with training in perinatal health. Her PhD research explored the prevalence and risk factors of postpartum depression among Bedouin women of the Negev. In her research, she developed a model for working with Bedouin women to detect, and treat PPD. **Ms. Ada Azbarga** is a rehabilitation advisor at a community mental health agency in Rahat. She has a background in psychology, and she is working with women suffering from mental illnesses, which included mothers with postpartum depression.



During this year, M2M team participated in weekly meetings for updates, supervision and discussions. We also have translated different M2M materials into Arabic such as a demographic and the post-partum depression screening questionnaire, brochures, and website in Arabic. We also set up our steering committee to guide this project, made up of experts on women's health and the Bedouin community.

Since the beginning of 2021, we have provided support to 50 new mothers, who joined either the on-line group or were matched with support by the project coordinator. We finished one support group for new mothers. Five mothers attended at a 5-week mothers' group together with her new infant, in which topics relating to "positive parenting" and perinatal health promotion are discussed and demonstrated in a supportive group setting, led by the M2M coordinators. We hope to organize more support groups among Bedouin women next year.

In addition, we conducted regular support, through both phone consultation and home visits around specific parenting or health issues, including exposure to COVID19 and protecting the health of herself and other family members. Some mothers may use all the forms of support, and some may choose only one type, such as group attendance or one-on-one personal support. During 2021, the coordinators took advantage of telephone, WhatsApp and ZOOM when personal meetings were not

Evaluation: Data were collected from 36 of the 50 mothers (Age 19-41) who completed our Arabic language questionnaire, including the PPD, EPDS screen (Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Screen), where scores of EPDS ≥ 10 are considered symptomatic of PPD, between 10-13 _are considered indicative of clinical PPD. The results from 36 showed that: Mean (SD) = 8.8 (8), Range 2 – 23, EPDS <10 (n=24), which is 66% of this group. EPDS 10 and over (n=12) 33.3% (This includes: EPDS 10-13 (n=8) 22%. EPDS ≥ 14 (n=4) 11%).

Public Activities for Mothers' Mental Health and Women's Health - Beer Sheva Municipality Joins Forces with the Center

This is the fifth year that our Center has taken a major role in activities to mark the International Mothers' Mental Health Day, which falls in the first week of May. Started by colleagues abroad, and disseminated by our M2M staff together with **Ms. Saralee Glasser** of the Gertner Institute and organized together with **Ms. Inbal Aviv** of WIZO, we helped to organize a full week of lectures and activities from May 2-May 7th 2021. All the lectures had to do with early detection and effective treatment of post-partum depression (PPD). There were lectures across six days of the week and all over Israel, with some 900 women participating.

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Zeadna on PPD treatment in a culturally-sensitive fashion for Bedouin women, Dr. **Shimrit Engelsman-Prins** on detecting and treating PPD among Haredi women, and **Dr. Meital Simhi** (who ZOOMed from Boston, MA) on the preferences of new mothers for MH treatment, among mothers with and without PPD symptoms.

International Day in Support of Breastfeeding among New Mothers, 3rd August, 2021

We organized, together with the Healthy Cities Team of the Beer Sheva Municipality (**Michael Ohayon** and **Etti Cohen**, MSWs), a symposium by ZOOM to mark the breastfeeding promotion day. The 3rd of August, by ZOOM, we hosted a lecture by **Nina Batashivili**, the senior breastfeeding consultant who has worked with M2M over the years. Nina works also at Maccabi Health Services and has a private practice. In addition, there were also lectures by **Tzvia Sitbon** on baby massage. Tzvia is a long-time volunteer for M2M. The final lecture was on pelvic floor exercises after birth and delivered by the physiotherapist, **Anna Ron-Rokeach** from Kupat Holim Clalit. **ADD the INVITATION HERE...**

Healthy Cities – Beer Sheva, Health Promotion for Women. December 14th, 2021 – Seeing Far, Seeing Pink – Health Promotion for Women with Breast Cancer

A full evening of lectures and activities for women coping with breast cancer was organized by **Michael Ohayon** and **Ms. Etti Cohen**, from the Healthy Cities initiative which is part of Beer Sheva's Welfare Department. Prof. Julie Cwikel together with Ms. Merav Daniel, who is recruiting women to participate in the CBT program she has constructed for her PhD research, gave the opening lecture. The lecture focused on the cognitive aspects of coping with a breast cancer diagnosis. This lecture was followed by lectures by a dietician, a representative of

Coping with breast cancer, cognitive aspects, **Prof. Julie Cwikel** together with **Ms. Merav Daniel**, PhD candidate. "**Seeing far, seeing pink**" – Health promotion for women – Beer-Sheva Municipality, the Welfare Department and Healthy Cities Initiative. December 14th, 2021

Isha Be-Shela – Counselling Service for Women and Men in the Negev

The Center's counselling service, known for its gender and culturally sensitive approach, has been operating for more than 13 years. During these years, this service has gained an excellent reputation as a provider of psychotherapy services in the Negev, in an outpatient, university-situated and research dedicated manner. As in past few years, we are working at full capacity and always have more clients seeking our services than we are able to provide psychotherapy for, creating a waiting list. The waiting list is partly a function of the COVID19 lockdowns and the stress it has engendered, and partly due to our capacity to recruit and provide supervision to new psychotherapists. The clinical director is **Ms. Limor Niego**, who took over the position this past year from **Ms. Noah Sitton**.

Since the beginning seen over 800 women and treatment, with around 90-any given time, with the majority of them are BGU have 11 psychotherapists more highly qualified staff to meet the demand of the 30. All of our regularly for supervision **Pinhasi** or **Ms. Neta** years, we have added five

some of our therapists who left to take on other roles as senior mental health professionals. The new



of the project, we have men in psychotherapy 100 persons in treatment at average age of 30. A students. Currently we and are hoping to recruit to join the project in order waiting list of between 20-psychotherapists meet with either **Ms. Sarit Magen**. These past two new therapists to replace

therapists include: **Tali Borosh, Noah Srer, Noa Weiss, Maya La Ganek** and **Naama Idsis**. All these psychotherapists have their MA, have completed a training course in psychotherapy and have at least 5 years' experience in treatment. We are very proud of the high professional level of our mental health professionals.

Publications and Academic Activities – Affiliated Academic Staff

Prof. Aya Biderman -Promoted to Full Professor! Hats off to Aya!

Publications

1. Raphael A, Friger M, **Biderman A**. Seasonal variations in HbA1c among type 2 diabetes patients on a semi-arid climate between the years 2005-2015. *Prim Care Diabetes*. 2021 Jun; 15(3):502-506. PMID: 33309124.
2. Akselrod D, Friger M, **Biderman A**. HbA1C variability among type 2 diabetic patients – A retrospective cohort study. *Diabetology & Metabolic Syndrome*. 2021. Sep 18;13(1):101
3. **Biderman**, A., Carmel, S., Amar, S. et al. Care for caregivers- a mission for primary care. *BMC Fam Pract* 2021. 22, 227. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12875-021-01579-6>

MD Students and Family Practice residents research projects

1. Blittman E, **Biderman A**. Mothers' Experiences in Encounters with Primary Physicians on Breastfeeding Issues - A Retrospective Qualitative Study. Study in progress. (Family medicine resident- research project)
2. Kats D, **Biderman A**, The difficulty in diagnosis and treatment of postpartum depression among women in Israel – a retrospective qualitative study. Study in progress. (Family medicine resident- research project)
3. Bader N, **Biderman A**, Depression and anxiety in primary care - comparison between Jewish and Arab patients in the Negev. Study in progress. (Family medicine resident - research project)
4. Star E, Lifshitz O, **Biderman A**, Osteoporosis screening and diagnosis – comparison between men and women in the community. Study in progress. (Family medicine resident- research project)
5. Buda L, Freud T, **Biderman A**. The Influence of the Educational Program "Your Inner Boundaries" on Adolescents' Knowledge, Attitudes and Behavior regarding Alcohol Use. Study completed. Article - in writing progress. (MD thesis)
6. Knowledge and attitudes of women regarding BRCA gene testing in Israel. With Dr Sh. Amar, T. Feinsilver and S. Leibowitz. Survey completed. Submitted for publication.
7. Prediabetes among Bedouin and Jewish patients in the Negev- predictors and outcomes. With Prof A. Rudich, Dr Idit Liberty. Study in progress.

Prof. Julie Cwikel

Publications:

Cwikel, J., Sheiner, E., Sergienko, R., Slusky, D., & Quastel, M. (2021). Hospitalizations among Chernobyl-exposed immigrants to the Negev of Israel, 1992–2017: A historical follow-up study. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 1-12.

Cwikel, J., & Simhi, M. (2021). Using the Hackathon Model in social work education. *Social Work Education*, 1-14.

Prins-Engelsman, S. & **Cwikel, J.** (2021). Pregnancy and childbirth experiences and their relationship to post-partum depression subgroups of Ultra-Orthodox women in Israel. *Society and Welfare*, (Hebrew). 2:277-294

Simhi, M., Sarid, O., & **Cwikel, J.** (2021). Treatment preferences for postpartum depression among new Israeli mothers: The contribution of health beliefs and social support. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*. In press.

Friedmann, E. & **Cwikel, J.** (2021). Women and Men's Perspectives on the Factors Related to Women's Dyadic Sexual Desire, and on the Treatment of Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder. *J. Clin. Med.* **2021**, *10*, 5321. doi: [10.3390/jcm10225321](https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm10225321)

Simhi, M. Sarid, O. Rowe, H. Fisher, **Cwikel J.** (2021) Is a cognitive-behavioral intervention for women managing postpartum anxiety and depression symptoms more effective by individual phone or group format? *J. Clin. Med.* (In press).

Guidotti TL, **Cwikel JG.** Rethinking public health as sustainability and environmental health as environmental justice. *Am J Public Health*. Published online ahead of print xxxx xx, 2021:e1–e2. Acceptance Date: October 22, 2021. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306616>

Public Lectures

Coping with breast cancer, cognitive aspects, **Prof. Julie Cwikel** together with **Ms. Merav Daniel**, PhD candidate. “**Seeing far, seeing pink**” – Health promotion for women – Beer-Sheva Municipality, the Welfare Department and Healthy Cities Initiative.
December 14th, 2021

Prevention of falls in the elderly. Lecture to English speakers, Ganei Omer, December 23rd, 2021

Research Grants

2020- 2021 - Assessment of voice markers of depression and other clinical states among medical staff treating patients with Corona Covid-19 and community residents during the Corona Crisis of 2020. President's special fund for Corona and private donor. Co-investigators with Dr. Dan Vilenchik, Dr. Alison Stern Perez, Mr. Ruslan Sergienko and clinical staff from Soroka.

2021-present COVANA – Combined voice and narrative analysis for early mental-health detection – building up a corpus for analysis. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Multidisciplinary Competitive Grant. Dr. Dan Vilenchik and Dr. Alison Stern Perez (co-investigators).

Prof. Ofer Edelstein

Publications:

Edelstein, O.E., Vered, I., & Sarid, O. (2021). Correlates of participation in physical activity among older women in Israel: Does ethno-cultural background matter? *Health Promotion International*, 36(1), 34–45.

Isralowitz, R., Reznik, A., Zolotov, Y., Grinstein-Cohen, O., Wacht, O., Pruginin, I., Yehudai, M., & **Edelstein**, O.E. (2021). Toward medical cannabis education in Israel. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 58, 102709.

Findley, P.A., **Edelstein**, O.E, Pruginin, I., Reznik, A., Milano, M., & Isralowitz, R. (2021). Attitudes and beliefs about medical cannabis among social work students: Cross-national comparison. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 58, 102716.

Likhitsathian S., **Edelstein**, O.E., Srisurapanont, M., Zolotov Y., Nuntaporn., Karawekpanyawong N., Reznik, A., & Isralowitz R. (2021). Cross-national comparison of medical students' attitudes and beliefs about medical cannabis and its application for pain management. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 59, 102720. [The first two authors have contributed equally to the manuscript]

Community Service:

Since 2021, I am serving as a member of JOINT-ELCA special task force for data-based prevention among the elderly. This project aims to prevent hazardous situations among the welfare of elderly clients, such as falls, loneliness, and neglect. My responsibilities are: a) to provide the data analysts with social, medical, and economic indicators to profile those who are at high risk; b) to design intervention programs to address the unique needs of this population, and to manage emergency situations.

Prof. Orly Sarid

Publications

Segal-Engelchin D, Huss E & **Sarid O**. (2021). The use of online CB-ART interventions in the context of COVID-19: enhancing salutogenic coping. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(4), 2057. doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18042057

Shapira S, Yeshua-Katz D, Goren G, Aharonson-Daniel L, Clarfield AM, & **Sarid O**. (2021). Evaluation of a short-term digital group intervention to relieve mental distress and promote well-being among community-dwelling older individuals during the COVID-19 outbreak: A study protocol. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9, 284-94. doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.577079

Goren G, Schwartz D , Friger M , Banai H, Sergienko, Regev S , Abu-Kaf H Greenberg D. , Nemirovsky A Ilan K, Lerner L, Monsonogo A, Dotan I, Yanai H, Eliakim R, Ben Horin S, Slonim-Nevo S, Odes S & **Sarid O**. (2021). Randomized controlled trial of cognitive behavioral and mindfulness-based stress reduction on the quality-of-life of patients with Crohn's disease. *Inflammatory Bowel Diseases*, 1-16. DOI: [10.1093/ibd/izab083](https://doi.org/10.1093/ibd/izab083)

Krieger Y, Pachevsky M, Shoham Y, Biederko R ,Novack L & **Sarid O** (2021). Relieving pain and distress symptoms in outpatient burn clinic: the contribution of a medical clown. *Burns*. doi.org/10.1016/j.burns.2021.06.008

Yeshua-Katz D, Shapira, S Aharonson-Daniel L, Clarfield AM, **Sarid O**. (2021). [Matching digital intervention affordances with tasks: The case of a zoom and WhatsApp mental health](#)

intervention for seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health Communication*. DOI: 10.1080/10410236.2021.1956071

Simhi M, Cwikel J, **Sarid O**. (2021). Treatment preferences for postpartum depression among new Israeli mothers: The contribution of health beliefs and social support. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association* .<https://doi.org/10.1177/10783903211042084>

Shapira S¹, Cohn-Schwartz E, Yeshua-Katz D, Aharonson-Daniel, Clarfield AM, & **Sarid O**. (2021). Teaching and practicing cognitive-behavioral and mindfulness skills in a web-based platform among older adults through the COVID-19 pandemic: a pilot randomized controlled trial. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214782921000087>.

Prof. Dorit Segal-Engelchin

Publications

Segal-Engelchin D, Huss E., & Sarid O. (2021). The use of online CB-ART interventions in the context of COVID-19: enhancing salutogenic coping. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18, 2057. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18042057> .

Erera, P.I., **Segal-Engelchin D.**, & Weatherley, R. A. (2021). Civil disobedience in the domestic sphere: The case of the hetero-gay family. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, 13(2), 224-238.

Hoffer , L. , Achdut, N., Shvarts, S., & **Segal-Engelchin, D.** (2021). Gender differences in psychosocial outcomes of hair Loss resulting from childhood irradiation for tinea capitis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18, 7825. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18157825>.

Conferences

Segal-Engelchin, D.,& Shvarts, S. (2021). Association between hair loss severity and risk for later mental health problems in women irradiated for tinea capitis in childhood. 29th European Congress of Psychiatry (EPA Virtual 2021), April, Online.

Segal-Engelchin, D.,& Erera, P. (2021). Impact of the hetero-gay family structure on mothers' well-being: A comparative study. 10th European Society of Family Relations (ESFR) Conference, August, Online.

Prof. Ilana Shoham-Vardi

Publications 2021

[Temporal trends in the incidence of and associations between the risk factors for obstetrical anal sphincter injuries.](#) Ekstein-Badichi N, Shoham-Vardi I, Weintraub AY. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* MFM. 2021 Jan;3(1):100247. doi: 10.1016/j.ajogmf.2020.100247. Epub 2020 Oct 6. PMID: 33451614

List of students 2020-21

Graduated

<u>Student</u>	<u>Academic degree</u>	<u>Collaboration with</u>	<u>Thesis title</u>
Goni Shelef	MD-MPH	Prof. Adi Weintraub	The Effect of Advanced Age and Ethnicity on Postoperative Complications Following Pelvic Floor Repair Surgeries
Matan Rotchild	MD-MPH	Prof. Adi Weintraub	Risk Factors associated with post-operative complications following urinary stress incontinence repair surgeries
Shifra Gottlieb - Unger	MPH (submitted)	Prof. Nadav Davidovitch And Dr. Zvika Orr	Social and Structural Determinants and Their Associations with Emergency Department Use and Patient Experience

Current

<u>Student</u>	<u>Academic degree</u>	<u>Collaboration with</u>	<u>Thesis title</u>
Noa Zangen	MD thesis	Prof. Adi Weintraub and Dr. Shimrit Yaniv- Salem	The association between duration of transition from latent to active labor and adverse obstetrical outcomes.
Leor Molcho	MPH	Prof. Nihaya Daoud and Prof. Dan Greenberg	Differences in healthcare services utilization between women with and without postpartum depression in Israel
Hen Avraham	MPH	Prof. Yan Press	The right time to sign Advance Healthcare Directive towards the end of life from the point of view of an internal medicine doctor

Prof. Shifra Shvarts

Publications

Shehory-Rubin Z., **Shvarts S.**, "Teaching the Children to Play: The Establishment of the First Playgrounds in Palestine during the British Mandate Period" in "Jewish and Arab Childhood in Israel: A Contributed Volume (Co-Editors: Baram-Eshel, Jayusi, Younis, Paul-Binyamin) 2021.

Liat Hoffer, Netta Achdut, **Shifra Shvarts**, Dorit Segal-Engelchin, Gender differences in psychosocial outcomes of hair loss resulting from childhood irradiation for tinea capitis, International Journal of Environmental Research 23 July 2021)

<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/15/7825>

Conferences

Segal-Engelchin, D., & **Shvarts, S. (2021)**. Association between hair loss severity and risk for later mental health problems in women irradiated for tinea capitis in childhood. 29th European Congress of Psychiatry (EPA Virtual 2021), April, online.

Shvarts Shifra, "The Struggle over the Establishment of Ben Gurion University Medical School", the 20th Conference of the Israeli Association of History Philosophy and Sociology of Science, June 2021, Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem.

Photos from Seeing Far – Seeing Pink





אגף הרווחה והשירותים החברתיים בתכנית אפשרי בריא בעיר
והמרכז לחקר וקידום בריאות האישה באוניברסיטת בן גוריון
בתכנית אם לאם מזמינים אתכן ל:

כנס אימהות לאחר לידה במסגרת "שבוע עידוד ההנקה הבינלאומי"

הנכן מוזמנות לכנס בזום שיתקיים
בתאריך 3/8 בין השעות 10:00-13:00

בתכנית:

- ברכות- גברת אתי כהן- מנהלת אגף הרווחה והשירותים החברתיים עיריית באר שבע
- פרופסור גזולי צוויקל- מנהלת המרכז לחקר וקידום בריאות האישה אוני' בן גוריון
- הרצאה-

10:00-11:00- "להניק ולהעניק-זה בריא" על ידי גברת נינה בתאשולי

אחות טיפת חלב ויועצת הנקה IBCLC- מכבי שירותי בריאות

11:00-12:00- "עיסוי תינוקות ומגע" על ידי גברת צבייה סיטבון

מדריכה לעיסוי תינוקות

12:00- פעילות גופנית אחרי לידה-

רצפת האגן הפעלה דינאמית עם גברת אנה רון רוקח

פיזיותרפיסטית שירותי בריאות כללית

בתום כל הרצאה יהיו מספר דקות לשיח שאלות ותשובות

הרשמה בלינק המצורף

לנרשמים יישלח קישור לזום ביום הכנס



לאומית

מאוחדת



THANK YOU!