



# Perspectives

The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research

Autumn 2011

*Research and Scholarship for an Informed Social Response to Human Life Questions*

## Come and hear the latest news on the abortion-breast cancer link

Here's an event not to be missed: the deVeber Institute Annual Public Lecture, on Wednesday 26th October at 7:00 p.m. in the Charbonnel Lounge, St Michael's College, University of Toronto. The keynote speaker will be Professor Dr. Angela Lanfranchi, a world expert on human breast surgery. She will be speaking to us about the latest findings on the link between abortion and breast cancer. She is ideally equipped to address this topic because of her thorough knowledge of the changing physiology of the human breast during pregnancy. One of the interesting aspects of her presentation will be the exposure of the politics behind the National Cancer Institute's denial of the abortion-breast cancer link, and the surprising fact that two of that Institute's own researchers have documented the link in their published writings.

As the deVeber Institute prepares a completely new edition of "Women's Health after Abortion" planned for release in 2012, we gratefully acknowledge the work of



Dr. Angela Lanfranchi

Dr. Lanfranchi on the chapter related to breast cancer. These annual lectures have been forums for remarkable speakers: Dr. Deb Zeni, Dr. Paul Ranalli, Dr. Nancy Olivieri, Dr. Robert Walley, researchers Ian Gentles and Elizabeth Ring Cassidy, and Intern Genevieve Bonomi.

Dr Lanfranchi is Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She has spoken all over the world, and written extensively on the subject of breast cancer risks. The co-founder and president of the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute, she is also an extremely popular physician, having been named a "Top Doc" in New Jersey for Women's Health in Breast Surgery. It will be a treat to hear what she has to say in her illustrated talk on this burning issue.

You're warmly invited to the deVeber Institute's Annual Public Lecture



Charbonnel Lounge

### **The Biological and Epidemiological Evidence for the Abortion Breast Cancer Link**

Wednesday, October 26th, 2011

Charbonnel Lounge, 81 St. Mary Street  
St. Michael's College, University of Toronto

Doors open 7:00 pm, lecture begins at 7:30 pm.

Light refreshments will be served.

Call to RSVP 416-256-0555 or email [bioethics@deveber.org](mailto:bioethics@deveber.org) before October 20th, 2011. Seating is limited! RSVP today!

# Summer students step forward

## Modern Sexism?

## A cultural preference for sons?

## The results of social/political pressure?

## An Eastern problem caused by Western governments?

These are just a few of the possible causes of the increase in sex selection abortion that deVeber student researcher Amy MacInnis explored during her summer work term.

In China, where sex selection abortion is most prevalent, there are currently 120 male births for every 100 female births. Sex selection has also resulted in a shortage of girls in Africa, India, Nepal, Vietnam, South Korea, and increasingly in the West, especially in predominantly immigrant cities.

**"I had two daughters and I was desperate for a boy. So when I got pregnant I had an ultrasound and it was another girl. I knew my husband would not accept another girl, so I had an abortion. There was no choice."**<sup>1</sup>

Adam Giancola of the University of Toronto, Amy MacInnis of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy, and Elaine Zettel of McMaster University worked under the direction of deVeber's senior researchers this summer to take many steps forward for the upcoming 3rd edition of *Women's Health After Abortion*.

Adam Giancola assisted Prof Ian Gentles with quantifying some of the common themes that were reported in the interview responses of women who have had abortions. He found that the majority of women did not undergo their abortion because of a free personal choice. Out of 72 interview respondents, 69.4% reported being pressured

or coerced into having an abortion. Had these women had supportive people in their lives rather than people who coerced and pressured them, perhaps their choices would have been different. Other themes studied included depression and also physical complications after abortion.

Elaine Zettel who is a 3rd year student in Midwifery finished up her summer experience by looking into recent developments in multi-fetal pregnancy reduction under Elizabeth Cassidy's direction. She found that in addition to selectively terminating fetuses in triplets or higher order pregnancies, it is becoming more common to abort one twin to reduce the pregnancy to a singleton. These findings and more will be published in the Institute's next edition of *Women's Health After Abortion*.

Working closely with the deVeber team, the student researchers made valuable contributions while also gaining insight into important issues affecting our world today. **Your support of the deVeber Institute at this time will enable us to make this research available to the public!**

1. Zhou, C. et al. "Son preference and sex-selective abortion in China: informing policy options." *International Journal of Public Health* [Epub ahead of print] (2011).

**Thanks to the Canada Summer Jobs Program and you, the donor's support, we were able to have 3 summer interns join us this summer!**



Adam Giancola



Amy MacInnis



Elaine Zettel

## Topics covered by deVeber 2011 summer student researchers:

- Sex selection abortion worldwide: the ethics, causes and consequences.
- Intimate partner violence and sexual abuse as motivators for induced abortion.
- Common themes among stories of women's memories of abortion.
- Review of the literature on relationships between abortion and infection, preterm birth, miscarriage, infertility and cancer.
- Multi-fetal pregnancy reduction, prenatal diagnosis – recent developments.

# Canada Needs a Strategy and Vision for Palliative Care

With good food, challenging questions and reflective answers (not to mention some draft ale!) the room was abuzz with our first ever "Café Scientifique." This downtown event was a lively mix of doctors, students, community volunteers, nurses and even 2 people playing 'hooky' from a Ba'hai Conference next door! We have just received funding for a 2012 Café Scientifique!

Over 70 guests gathered at a busy Toronto pub, the Fox and Fiddle, on Thursday April 28th, 2011 to hear two experts on end-of-life care, Dr. José Pereira (Ottawa) and Dr. Gary Rodin (Toronto). This discussion, made possible by funding from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) enabled the deVeber Institute to host these two world-renowned experts in an open forum-style discussion entitled Palliative Care: Where Are We Going? The Canadian Experience.

**"As a country we don't have a national strategy or vision for palliative care"** says Dr Gary Rodin. Head of the Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care Program at Princess Margaret Hospital and a Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto.

Good palliative care cannot only improve the quality of life but can improve the length of the life of the patient. Why? Dr. Rodin explained, "It could be the meticulous attention the palliative care team gave them and it could also be the less toxic drugs given at end of life."

Rodin remarked how many see euthanasia as the solution to end pain and suffering, but often don't consider other issues that might prompt patients to want to end their lives. These include lack of proper social support, unresolved emotional pain or depression. All these factors must be examined.



Dr. Gary Rodin



Dr. José Pereira

**Palliative care is about caring for the whole patient, their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. – Dr. Pereira**

In the past, doctors were taught, but have lately forgotten that medicine cannot always cure, both doctors agreed. Dr. José Pereira, a University of Ottawa professor and physician heads the Palliative Care unit at the Bruyère Continuing-care long-term care hospital in Ottawa.

Pereira has argued – with some recent success – that the training of all doctors should include palliative care, that this will enable doctors to furnish what their dying patients need, and usually want: compassionate and competent care, and someone to tell them the truth about their condition. **"There are some studies that show the more training you have in palliative care, the less likely you are to support legalizing euthanasia,"** pointed out Dr. Pereira.

Pereira continued, there is no reason why over 50 per cent of cancer patients are dying in acute care hospitals in Ontario. "That's astronomically high."

Three million dollars for palliative care was allocated in the recent Federal budget – thanks in part to Pereira's efforts. "But still more needs to be done, starting in open discussions like the one this evening," added Pereira.

## **The deVeber Institute would like to sincerely thank**

Mr. Keith Neely of Physicians' Financial Advisors Inc., for his support in taping this evening in April. Copies of this DVD can be obtained by contacting the deVeber Institute at [bioethics@deveber.org](mailto:bioethics@deveber.org) or calling us at 416-256-0555.

## Physicians' Financial Advisors Inc.

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We are helping individuals and doctors across Canada.

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Dr. Greg Stewart – Medical Doctor, Huntsville, Ont.

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We've come a long way...  
but we need your help

The deVeber Institute strives to provide the most timely and relevant reports and research that matters. We host speakers on controversial issues like euthanasia and women's health after abortion, discussions we know spark debates and ignite conversations that otherwise would not happen. All of our activities are thanks to your generosity and financial support. We cannot do it without you. We rely on your support now more than ever. **We've enclosed a reply envelope with this newsletter in hopes that you may consider supporting us for work that matters.**

## deVeber Annual Public Lecture:

(Just a reminder from page 1)

**FREE!**

**Dr. Angela Lanfranchi: The Biological and Epidemiological Evidence for the Abortion Breast Cancer Link**

This Lecture is not to be missed!

Wednesday October 26th, 7:30 pm

Charbonnel Lounge, 81 St. Mary Street, St. Michael's College  
University of Toronto

Call to RSVP 416-256-0555 or email [bioethics@deveber.org](mailto:bioethics@deveber.org)

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**1912 A Avenue Road, Unit E#10, North York, M5M 4A1**



## The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research

Founded in 1982

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