Another successful IASR conference has come to a close. This year we were graciously hosted in Charleston, South Carolina by IASR member, Dr. Greg Dwyer. This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to reflections on the conference—to finding out more about conference award winners and reviewing social and scientific highlights. We also wanted to use this space to thank all of those who made the conference such a resounding success, including the local team: Alison Knight, Joseph C. Cheng, Robert A. Ellis, E. Thomas Lewis III, and Stephanie Mishoe, as well as Jarret Thompson and Kelly Suschinsky. Finally, thank you to Brian Mustanski and Justin Lehmiller for their preconference presentations, and to the efforts of John Sakaluk, who was unfortunately unable to make the preconference workshop due to flight delays. These individuals' tireless work behind the scenes was essential and clearly evident in the success of IASR Charleston 2017!
Awards from Charleston!

**Student Research Development Award (SRDA)**

**Amber Craig**

I have just entered my fourth year in the clinical science doctoral program at Indiana University Bloomington, where I am working under the guidance of Dr. Julia Heiman. My research broadly focuses on examining sexual decision making in “high risk” groups. Currently, I am using a sexual delay discounting task to examine condom use decisions in men with and without alcohol use disorders. This work will increase our understanding of why some individuals choose to forgo safer sex practices in favor of riskier, but more easily attainable sexual rewards, and how sexual arousal may influence condom use intentions. I am also working on a modified version of the delay discounting task which will examine decisions to engage in sexually coercive behavior (i.e. the forgoing of consensual sexual activity, which may require waiting longer, in favor of utilizing sexually coercive strategies to obtain immediate sexual gratification). Funds from this award will enable me to compensate participants in both studies.

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**Student Research Development Award (SRDA)**

**Francisco Gómez**

I am currently a first-year PhD student at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada, working under the supervision of Dr. Paul Vasey. During my MSc degree, I conducted research on cross-culturally universal aspects of male same-sex attraction by studying third-gender males in the Istmo region of Oaxaca, Mexico, known locally as *muxes*. My doctoral research will continue this line of inquiry by expanding on more universal correlates of male sexual orientation, such as whether having less long bone growth in the arms, hands, and legs, is characteristic of same-sex attracted males across cultures. If *muxes* do in fact have shorter bones in the hands, legs, and arms, than straight men, my doctoral research would suggest that same-sex attracted males are less exposed or receptive to hormones that regulate the growth of long bones. As such, part of my Doctoral research will be focused on determining what morphological traits characterizes same-sex attracted males, and whether these traits are consistent across cultures.
Best Student Manuscript

Pubertal stress and nutrition and their association with sexual orientation and height in the add health data

Malvina Skorska

I completed a PhD in Psychology at Brock University in St. Catharines, ON, Canada in August 2016, working under the supervision of Dr. Anthony Bogaert. During graduate school, my research focused on physical development markers related to sexual orientation (e.g., height, facial structure). This research is important and fascinating because it sheds light on the development of sexual orientation, including testing sexual differentiation-related explanations of the origins of sexual attractions. I am deeply honored to receive the Best Student Manuscript Award from IASR for one of my dissertation studies that tested alternative explanations of the association between height and sexual orientation. This study found that neither stress or nutrition at puberty explained the association between height and sexual orientation in men (the association is generally not found in women). Indirectly, this finding provides support for the role of other mechanisms, including a popular prenatal androgen hypothesis, to explain the link between height and sexual orientation in men.

Since completing my PhD, I have been working on research related to the fraternal birth order effect and sexual orientation in men with Dr. Bogaert and I will be continuing with this exciting work in the future, examining the association between a mother's immune system and the sexual orientation of her offspring. I hope to delve deeper into the mechanisms of sexual attractions and sexual differentiation as part of a postdoctoral fellowship I will start in September 2017 with Dr. Doug VanderLaan at the University of Toronto Mississauga. My main focus during this fellowship will be to conduct important work on the brain structure of adolescents who experience gender dysphoria. I will also further investigate physical development related to sexual attractions in a cross-cultural population. Equally important, when not engaged in research activities, you can find me running, hiking, skiing, at the gym, traveling, or enjoying a nice glass of wine.

Malvina in Niagara wine country!
Best Student Poster

Extending the relationship maintenance framework: Sexual maintenance behaviors in long-distance and geographically close relationships

Kaitlyn M. Goldsmith
Research institution and program: Clinical Psychology, University of New Brunswick (Advisor: Dr. Sandra Byers).
Focus of research: Kaitlyn’s dissertation research focuses on sexuality in long-distance relationships. She is examining how individuals in long-distance relationships navigate their sexual relationships in light of geographical distance as well as how various sexual behaviors contribute to sexual outcomes for individuals in long-distance relationships compared to geographically close relationships.
Years attending IASR meetings: Kaitlyn attended her first meeting in Lisbon (2012) as an undergraduate and plans to attend the upcoming 2018 meeting in Madrid.

Best Student Poster: Runner up

Would You Say You ‘Had Sex’ If…? A Comparison of Age-Matched Samples of Self-Identified Heterosexual, Bisexual, and Homosexual Women and Men

Lindsey Breitwieser
Research institution and program: Indiana University, Bloomington Department of Gender Studies
Focus of research: Feminist science and technology studies; gender and medicine; disability and madness studies. Lindsey is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Gender Studies at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. She is an IU College of Arts and Sciences and Woodrow Wilson Foundation Fellow. Her dissertation examines the necropolitics of biomedicine and the gendered and dis/abled dimensions of postmortem pregnancies, or the continued gestation of a fetus in a brain-dead woman. Her IASR 2017 poster presentation “Would You Say You ‘Had Sex’ If…?” represented work with colleagues and mentors from the Kinsey Institute. Our findings confirm that lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals indicate that a broad range of behaviors constitute “having sex.” This indicates a continual need to evaluate how “sex” may take on multiple definitions and is deployed in clinical, research, and educational settings.
Years attending IASR meetings: This was Lindsey’s first IASR!
Best Senior Poster

Predictors of sexual satisfaction during pregnancy: A multi-level model describing the sexuality of couples in their first 12 weeks.

Sophia Jawed-Wessel: I am an Assistant Professor at University of Nebraska at Omaha in Health & Kinesiology and Women and Gender Studies. My research focuses on understanding and improving the sexual health of women and couples as they transition into parenthood by documenting sexual behaviors, sexual function, relationship adjustment, and overall sexual changes during pregnancy and after childbirth. Also of interest is public perceptions of pregnant women and attitudes individuals hold about sex during pregnancy. I believe that understanding our attitudes about the juxtaposition of pregnancy and sexual pleasure reveals the complexities of objectification of women.

Best Senior Poster: Runner Up

The role of pornography secret keeping in romantic relationships

Brian J. Willoughby

Brian is currently an associate professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University. Dr. Willoughby’s research generally focuses on how adolescents, young adults, and adults move toward and form long-term committed relationships. He is the author of the recently published book, The Marriage Paradox: Why Emerging Adults Love Marriage Yet Push it Aside, published by Oxford University Press. Dr. Willoughby also currently serves on the editorial boards for Emerging Adulthood, the Archives of Sexual Behavior, the Journal of Sex Research and the Journal of Adult Development. Dr. Willoughby has particularly focused in the sexuality area on how pornography is utilized by both individuals and couples. His research on pornography use within couple relationships is aimed at understanding how contextual factors may shift relational outcomes associated with pornography use, either alone or with one’s partner. Dr. Willoughby hopes that by better understanding the nuances of how pornography is utilized within the realm of couple sexuality that educators, clinicians, and policy makers can make better informed decisions about how to improve couple well-being.
**Best Brief Communication**

**Pornography: Women’s agentic strategies for avoiding negative affect and maintaining positive experiences**

**Sara Chadwick:** I am currently a 4th year PhD student in the Joint Program in Psychology and Women’s Studies at the University of Michigan, working with Dr. Sari van Anders. My research is primarily focused on how gendered expectations influence people’s sexual behaviors and experiences, specifically related to orgasm and sexual desire. I am also interested in assessing women’s agency as a vital determinant of women’s sexual experiences. At this year’s IASR conference, I presented data from my lab that explored how women use pornography. We found that women employ multiple strategies to avoid and alter content they find problematic, such as searching for low-risk pornography, manipulating the pornography before and as they use it, and choosing written vs. visual pornography as a way to maintain control. Overall, our findings emphasize the importance of recognizing women as co-constituents of their own sexual experiences.

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**Best Brief Communication: Runner Up**

**Hookup app use among adolescent men who have sex with men.**

**Brian Mustanski, Ph.D.** is a tenured Professor of Medical Social Sciences at Northwestern University, Director of the Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing, Co-Director of the Third Coast Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), and Co-Director of the Center for Prevention Implementation Methodology for Drug Abuse and HIV. The majority of his research focuses on the health and development of LGBTQ youth and the application of new media and technology to sexual health promotion and HIV prevention. Dr. Mustanski’s work spans the translational spectrum and includes epidemiological studies, longitudinal cohort studies focused on developmental trajectories and risk/protective mechanism, the development and testing of HIV interventions, and dissemination / implementation science. He has been a Principal Investigator of over $38 million in federal and foundation research and training awards. His current projects include a NIDA-funded dyadic-network cohort study of young gay/bisexual men that seeks to gain a multilevel perspectives on the drivers of substance use and HIV in this population, several randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of HIV prevention program for adolescent and young adult gay/bisexual men (NIDA, NIMH, NIMHD), and an NIMHD-funded study of ethical considerations in LGBT adolescent participation in HIV prevention research. Dr. Mustanski has published over 170 peer reviewed journal articles. Recognition for his work include being named a William T Grant Scholar and the Award for Distinguished Scientific Contribution from the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues of the American Psychological Association. Dr. Mustanski is a frequent adviser to federal agencies and foundations on LGBTQ health needs and research priorities.
Best Brief Communication: Runner Up

Internet-based guided self-help for vaginal penetration difficulties: Results of a randomized controlled pilot trial and implementation of derived recommendations in a follow-up randomized controlled study

Anna-Carlotta Zarski is currently in the third year of her PhD at Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, in the Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy. Her research focuses on Genito-Pelvic Pain/Penetration Disorder (GPPPD) not only adversely affects women’s sexuality and sexual satisfaction, but is also associated with a wide range of psychosocial consequences such as reduced quality of life and well-being, mental health comorbidities, and relationship distress. Evidence for effective treatment options is scarce. The vast majority of women experiencing sexual difficulties do not seek treatment although they feel severely distressed. Barriers to seeking help from health care professionals include feelings of shame, fear of stigmatization, invalidation of suffering, and low availability of specialized treatment. Internet-based interventions can be one strategy to address some of the limitations of traditional psychological interventions with regard to limited availability, high threshold, and costs. Anna-Carlotta’s research focuses on developing a guided internet-based treatment approach for GPPPD and its evaluation in a randomized controlled trial with the aim of complementing treatment offers for women with sexual dysfunctions.

Richard Green Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Ray Blanchard
“I am honored that Ray Blanchard is receiving a lifetime achievement award bearing my name. For decades I have admired his extensive, thoughtful, and unique contributions to sexual science. Ray, we are more the scholarly discipline thanks to you.”

– Richard Green

Q & A with Dr. Ray Blanchard

What early steps helped you build your career?

I received a solid grounding in both the substance and methodology of behavioral research as an undergraduate Psychology major at the University of Pennsylvania and then as a doctoral student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. So my formal education was a good preparation for behavioral research in general, although it was zero preparation for the specific content area of human sexuality.

What advice do you wish you could give to yourself as you started your research career? And what advice would you give to young researchers who are just beginning their careers?

First piece of advice: If you’re averse to statistics—and I certainly was—make an effort to become comfortable with them. Basic competence in statistics can never hurt you, and it might turn out to be your best friend. It is actually quite limiting to regard statistics as something you just hold your nose and get through.

Second piece of advice: Be very cautious about entering into research collaborations. The notion of adding a social, interactive component to research activity may seem very appealing, but it is nowhere truer that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. You can waste a lot of time if your research partners are much less committed to a project than you are.

What factors determined the research choices that you made, and how/why did you pursue the areas that you did?

Chance always played a big role in my research choices. I was about 33 years old—well after my Ph.D. and postdoc—before the idea of doing sex research ever crossed my mind, and when this notion did occur, it was the result of chance. My first job was as a clinical psychologist at a medium secure prison. The pioneering forensic sexologist, Kurt Freund, consulted there, and so I became acquainted with him and with his signature achievement, phallometric testing. I was very intrigued by the idea of a laboratory test for diagnosing a psychiatric condition (primarily pedophilia at that point). So the initial hook for me was the idea of a laboratory technology rather than a desire to study human sexual behavior. Of course I soon became interested in sexual behavior per se and came to regard phallometric testing as merely one tool among others.

Again by happenstance, my first opportunity to get a job with a research component was at the Gender Identity Clinic of the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry. I had no particular interest in transsexualism at the time when the Psychologist position at that clinic became available, but I knew that clinical sexology positions with research duties did not grow on trees, so I jumped for it.
After taking the job I did become interested in gender identity disorders and their associated erotic anomalies, and I quickly realized that there was a lot of conceptual and empirical work to be done in that area.

My 25-year research program on fraternal birth order and male homosexuality also began by pure chance, when I inadvertently replicated some old findings—which I hadn’t previously believed—while in the process of merging computer files for some unrelated purpose.

Your work has garnered both academic and public attention. What strategies have helped you survive in the midst of this attention?

Attention per se is not a problem. On the contrary, getting attention for one’s work is quite desirable nowadays, with thousands of new journal articles being churned out every month. The fact that one article in 100 might be scientifically important while the other 99 are simply incremental or even downright trivial does not guarantee that the one important article will automatically win everyone’s attention. I am therefore in favor of press releases and social media to publicize new findings (or important replication studies) that may be of general interest to the intelligent lay person. There is, of course, a toxic kind of attention that can result when an empirical result contradicts the dogma of a special interest group or an activist group.

What key thinkers/researchers are a "must read" to inform the thinking of aspiring researchers?

I am not very interested in Grand Unified Theories that attempt to explain the totality of human behavior, including its many and varied psychopathologies, with one or a few simple principles. “Must-read” books tend to be thesis-driven works of this type, so I wouldn’t know what to recommend from that genre.

Within the narrow field of gender identity disorders, I would recommend J. Michael Bailey’s The Man Who Would be Queen and Anne A. Lawrence’s Men Trapped in Men’s Bodies. Students interested in the very real conflicts between social justice activists and sex researchers should read Alice Dreger’s Galileo’s Middle Finger.

If money and recruitment of participant populations were not obstacles, what study or experiment would you like to see conducted to address an ongoing scientific debate?

An ocean of ink has been spilled on theories about causes of homosexuality in humans. In contrast to the number of armchair speculations, the number of laboratory studies has been strikingly small. There are probably multiple reasons for this. For one thing, laboratory research is expensive, and government grant monies are often intended for clinical problems and not for benign variations like homosexuality. Another reason is that the intersection of people who have (1) a serious interest in researching homosexuality, (2) expertise in a laboratory science, and (3) a paying job that would allow them to use their expertise and resources for this topic is quite small. So my (obviously) ideal research project would be something like this: A cohort of pregnant women donates biological samples for various assays (e.g., DNA, intrauterine hormone levels, antibody concentrations) and then the sexual orientations of their offspring are assessed 25 years postpartum.
What are the biggest outstanding questions in sexual science that are yet to be answered?

I couldn’t make a comprehensive list, because I am more of a specialist than a generalist.

One question is whether evolutionary psychology can offer a parsimonious explanation of sexual variations (including paraphilias and gender identity disorders) and validate this explanation with genuinely novel predictions (i.e., the predicted findings have never been sought or observed before), or whether paraphilias and gender identity disorders need to be explained piecemeal (pretty much the way medicine approaches different types of disorders).

What role has IASR (and other professional affiliations) played in catalyzing your research program? What advice can you give to students wanting to build productive professional relationships with other researchers?

It has been said that scientific advances result from the combination of findings from different specialties. I don’t know whether this is truer than any other generalization, but it has been somewhat true for me; my work on fraternal birth order combined knowledge from behavioral science, demography, and immunology.

It can be difficult to extract relevant information from a scientific literature for which one has no formal preparation, so consultation or collaboration with bona fide experts from other fields can be invaluable. Relatively rare organizations like IASR, which are attended by researchers from sociology, psychology, biology, and medicine, offer the opportunity to meet colleagues from different disciples, who might become resources or collaborators in the future.

Sex research is often controversial. What advice would you give to graduate students who worry that potential controversy may negatively impact their future career prospects?

It is difficult for me to answer this based on my personal experience. I was never in a situation where I felt I would put my job at risk if I spoke my mind. It would be phony for me to exhort others to bravery when my own was never so severely tested. It seems feasible—or even probable—to me that I would be fired if I were publishing my autogynephilia papers now and extremist trans activists or their allies complained to my former employer. (Something quite similar to that actually happened to a close colleague who worked at the same hospital a few years after I retired.) I don’t know whether I would go ahead and publish if I feared it might cost me my job. One never knows these things for sure until one is actually in the situation.

On the other hand, I occasionally meet people—including students—who simply seem phobic of doing or publishing any research that might offend anyone. They just seem to recoil at the thought of facing any hostility. I don’t think that such hypersensitivity conduces to the production of serious novel findings, because such findings usually go against the existing peer consensus and often excite a kind of reflexive opposition from other academics. If no one is objecting to what you’re saying, you’re probably not saying much of anything.

“If no one is objecting to what you’re saying, you’re probably not saying much of anything.”

– Ray Blanchard
We are always looking for contributions to the student newsletter—whether they be photographic, textual, or purely conceptual. Two great ways to contribute are to propose an idea for the front-page article or to submit a student bio or exciting news about recent publications. This is a newsletter primarily for the students, so we are always happy to hear what you would like to see featured on the front page, and a student bio can be a great way to introduce yourself to other members of the IASR community. If you would like to contribute to upcoming newsletters, please email your student representatives (Katy Renfro and Scott Semenyna) at: iasrstudentrep@gmail.com

Mark your calendars for our IASR 2018, which will take place July 17-20 in beautiful Madrid, Spain! More information will be forthcoming in future newsletters and via the IASR listserv.
Memories from Charleston