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Dr. Tarasenko named Exceptional Reviewer

September 5, 2014



Dr. Yelena Tarasenko named exceptional reviewer for *The Journal of Rural Health* for the period between July 2013 and June 2014. Dr. Tarasenko is an assistant professor of Health Policy and Management and Epidemiology at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University.

Academic journals rely on the unpaid work of professionals to select only the highest quality articles and advance the scholarly field. Exceptional reviewers were identified as being in approximately the top 15% of all *JRH* peer reviewers according to the quality, frequency and timeliness of their reviews

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Temporal Trends in Preparedness Capacity

September 5, 2014



Dr. Gulzar Shah, Associate Dean of Research at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University examines temporal trends in preparedness capacity. In view of the critical role local health departments (LHDs) play among agencies responsible for responding to natural and man-made emergencies, Bevc et al. examined the LHDs' emergency preparedness and capacity. They compared LHDs in North Carolina with those across the country for preparedness along eight domains. Significant declines in emergency preparedness were noted from 2010 to 2012 for five out of eight domains, raising questions about our national priority concerning this important function of public health agencies. These findings have numerous implications, some of which are covered in this [commentary](#).

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Parental Perceptions

September 5, 2014

A collaborative study including Dr. Andrew Hansen, assistant professor of Community Health Behavior and Education, Dr. Yelena Tarasenko, assistant professor of Health Policy and Management and Epidemiology, and Dr. Jian Zhang, associate professor of Epidemiology at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University, examines the [Generational Shift in Parental Perceptions of Overweight Among School-Aged Children](#). Parental perceptions of child's weight status may influence family readiness to foster healthy behaviors.

Research demonstrates that parents can have incorrect perceptions of their child's weight status. "Childhood is a crucial time to start lifelong healthy behaviors. If caregivers do not perceive the effects of unhealthy behaviors and engage in healthy eating and physical activity as a family, children will be on a path to overweight and related health issues like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases sooner." This new study demonstrates that parental perceptions about children's weight have shifted over a 10 year period and that more parents incorrectly perceive their child to be at a healthy weight. As obesity rates have increased it appears that what is perceived as about the right weight has also increased. Social comparison theory explains this phenomenon noting that individuals compare themselves to others instead of a standardized scale like the CDC growth charts used by public health professionals and doctors. Data collected in the NHANES 1988–1994 ($n = 2871$) and 2005–2010 ($n = 3202$) was used for the analysis. Parents, mainly mothers, were asked whether they considered their child, ages 6 to 11 years, to be overweight, underweight, or just about the right weight. Parent perceptions and child weight status for both time periods were compared to determine if misperceptions existed. The study concluded that overweight/obese children were less likely to be perceived as overweight during 2005-2010 when compared with peers of similar weight but surveyed 10+ years earlier. The declining tendency among parents to perceive overweight children appropriately may indicate a generational shift in social norms related to body weight.

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