



TENTH ANNUAL

# Global Health Symposium

March 20-23, 2023

*Sponsored by*

**Office of Global Health**

**Office of Faculty Affairs**

TENTH ANNUAL  
**Global Health Symposium**

March 20-23, 2023

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## Events at a Glance

All events will be held from noon to 1 p.m. each day.

### Monday, March 20

Armour Academic Center  
(AAC) 540

#### **Historically Contextualizing the Global State of Reproductive Health**

**Sarah B. Rodriguez, PhD**

*Associate Professor of Instruction, Global Health Studies, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences*

*Lecturer, Medical Education, Feinberg School of Medicine*

*Faculty, Medical Humanities & Bioethics Graduate Program*

*Northwestern University*

### Tuesday, March 21

AAC 540

#### **Abortion and Reproductive Politics in China**

**Sarah Mellors Rodriguez, PhD**

*Assistant Professor of History, Missouri State University*

### Wednesday, March 22

AAC 540

#### **Global Burden of Unsafe Abortion and Strategies for Expanding Quality Abortion Care**

**Laura Laursen, MD, MS**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Division of Family Planning, RUSH Medical College*

### Thursday, March 23

AAC 539

#### **Structural Racism's impact on Bodily Autonomy: Reframing Abortion Access as a Racial Justice Issue**

**Asha Hassan, MPH**

*Graduate Researcher, Center for Anti Racism research for Health Equity*

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Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

I am excited to welcome you to the 10th annual Global Health Symposium. We are eager to hear from this year's group of accomplished speakers as they share their views and experiences.

One of the goals of the Office of Global Health is to demonstrate the RUSH community's successes in the Global Health arena and to facilitate opportunities for scholarly work, collaboration, research and services in global health initiatives that benefit international communities.

Many of our faculty, students, residents, fellows and staff devote their time and efforts to make an impact worldwide. The Global Health Symposium provides a forum for our colleagues at RUSH, and around the world, to discuss their work.

I thank you for supporting the Offices of Faculty Affairs and Global Health and look forward to your continued involvement.

Sincerely,



Susan Chubinskaya, PhD  
Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs, RUSH University

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Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

On behalf of the Office of Global Health at RUSH, welcome to the 10th annual Global Health Symposium. Last summer's reversal of *Roe v. Wade* by the U.S. Supreme Court has changed our health care system — and access to abortion care — in countless ways.

The health, economic and social burdens of restricting access to abortion is falling disproportionately on lower-income individuals, resulting in worsening inequities in health outcomes and perpetuating the cycles of poverty and structural racism. Illinois is a destination for people seeking this care, with many coming from neighboring states that have imposed limits. Globally, complex webs of culture, politics and resource distribution also result in barriers to accessing abortion care.

This year's Global Health Symposium will give us space for dialogue about many of these issues:

- What can we learn from examining the global history of reproductive rights?
- How can understanding the sociopolitical and public health implications of the reversal of China's one-child policy inform our own policy landscape?
- How has the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* affected women's health practitioners locally?

Considering the U.S. Supreme Court's decision through an equity lens allows us to better understand the realities of the disenfranchised in our country, as well as what women in countries with limited options for abortion care face on a daily basis.

Our speakers are experts in health equity and autonomy in reproductive health, and we are grateful for their participation. Thank you for joining us this week. We hope that the knowledge you have gained inspires you to continue engaging with this important topic.

Gratefully,



Stephanie Crane, MD  
Director, Office of Global Health, RUSH University

Global Health Symposium  
Monday, March 20, 2023

Noon to 1 p.m., AAC 540



**Historically Contextualizing the Global State of Reproductive Health**

**Sarah B. Rodriguez, PhD**

Associate Professor of Instruction, Global Health Studies, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences  
Lecturer, Medical Education, Feinberg School of Medicine  
Faculty, Medical Humanities and Bioethics Graduate Program  
Northwestern University

**Synopsis**

A central concern regarding reproduction is power — power between men and women, between the state and its citizens, between clinicians and their patients. This talk will contextualize the current state of global reproductive health. We will consider not only the power inequalities and inequities but also resistance and revolution.

The session will explore a few core events within the history of reproductive health since the early 20th century, in particular the spread and uptake of modern forms of birth control, the midcentury population control movement, the increased legalization of abortion globally since the 1960s and the shift away from family planning to reproductive health and reproductive justice.

By doing so, one can note the outline of how history, especially regarding reproductive health, is a useful tool for health care practitioners.

**Biography**

Sarah B. Rodriguez, PhD, teaches at Northwestern University where she is an associate professor of Instruction in the Global Health Studies Program in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, a Lecturer in Medical Education in the Feinberg School of Medicine and a faculty member of the Medical Humanities and Bioethics Graduate Program. She is a medical historian who focuses on the history of reproduction, the history of changes in clinical practice and on the history of clinical research.

Global Health Symposium  
Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Noon to 1 p.m., AAC 540



**Abortion and Reproductive Politics in China**

**Sarah Mellors Rodriguez, PhD**

Assistant Professor of History, Missouri State University

**Synopsis**

China has one of the highest abortion rates in the world, with an annual rate of 49 abortions per 1,000 reproductive-aged women. This is often attributed to the One Child Policy (1979-2015), yet even when abortion was illegal in the early twentieth century, it was already commonplace.

This talk — based on her new book, *Reproductive Realities in Modern China: Birth Control and Abortion, 1911-2021* — traces the history of contraception and abortion in China from the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 to the present. Rodriguez demonstrates how inconsistent state policies and patriarchal norms have historically worked in concert to normalize abortion as birth control.

**Biography**

Sarah Mellors Rodriguez, PhD, is an assistant professor of East Asian History at Missouri State University. Her book *Reproductive Realities in Modern China: Birth Control and Abortion, 1911-2021* uses interviews and archival research to analyze how ordinary women and men navigated China's shifting fertility policies both before and during the One Child Policy era.



**Global Burden of Unsafe Abortion and Strategies for Expanding Quality Abortion Care**

**Laura Laursen, MD, MS**

Assistant Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Division of Family Planning  
RUSH Medical College

**Synopsis**

Safe abortion care is an essential component of comprehensive health care. In settings where abortion is restricted, patients often access abortion outside of the formal health care system. For many people, particularly in developing countries, these constraints lead to unsafe abortion.

Almost half of abortions worldwide are unsafe. Tragically, unsafe abortion is the leading preventable cause of maternal mortality and contributes to 13% of maternal deaths worldwide.

There are innovative solutions to this problem. Laura Laursen, MD, MS, will discuss who is working to improve the safety of abortion, both abroad and in the United States. She will show how both large changes in policy and individual grassroots educations empower patients, ensure safe abortion and improve reproductive health overall.

**Biography**

Laursen is an assistant professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Division of Family Planning at RUSH University. She is also an abortion provider at Planned Parenthood of Illinois and medical director of Inpatient Obstetrics at RUSH.

She attended medical school at Northwestern University, completed a residency at University of Illinois at Chicago and completed a fellowship in complex family planning at University of Chicago. She has helped develop medication abortion guidelines at the World Health Organization and worked to increase safe surgical abortion access in Ethiopia.

Currently, she is focused on ensuring access to abortion for all patients throughout the United States and caring for patients with complex medical conditions who need reproductive health care.



**Structural Racism’s Impact on Bodily Autonomy: Reframing Abortion Access as a Racial Justice Issue**

**Asha Hassan, MPH**

Graduate Researcher, Center for Anti Racism research for Health Equity

**Synopsis**

Structural racism is a fundamental cause of racial inequalities in reproductive health. These inequities are further compounded by the continuous waves of abortion restrictive policies. Unpacking the relationships between structural racism and abortion access is vital to reimagining a justice- and equity-informed vision of reproductive health care in a post-Dobbs world.

Leveraging a reproductive justice lens, this talk will discuss the history of abortion in racialized communities in the United States, explore the relationship between structural racism and abortion access and describe the inequitable effects of abortion restrictions at home and abroad.

Furthermore, we will discuss what U.S. providers and practitioners can learn from global reproductive health about providing care and conducting research in restrictive policy environments.

**Biography**

Asha Hassan, MPH, (she/her) is a health services researcher and epidemiologist based in Minneapolis. Her work focuses on achieving reproductive health equity, unpacking the nuances of abortion access policy and understanding police violence as a manifestation of structural racism.

Hassan has a bachelor’s degree in gender and women’s studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a master’s degree in public health in maternal and child health epidemiology from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and is currently pursuing a doctorate at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health.

In 2020, Hassan was named a Society of Family Planning Emerging Scholar and in 2021 was named a National Birth Equity Research Scholar. Her scholarly work has been published in several top journals, including the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, *the American Journal of Public Health* and *Health Services Research*.

Hassan also gives frequent expert interviews on racism, equity and reproductive health with media outlets like ProPublica, CNN and NBC.

**Our Mission**

RUSH University believes that every person in every community deserves access to public and personal health services and is committed to eliminating health disparities at home and abroad. The Office of Global Health is proud to provide opportunities for students, residents, fellows, faculty and staff to serve and learn in partnership with global communities in pursuit of this goal.



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All photos were taken with consent of the patients/individuals.

