Research

Please see my Research Statement for a summary of my past work. There are several primary directions I would like to pursue in my future work. First, I have applied for funding from NIH to test a theoretical model that emphasizes important antecedent processes and mediators that influence the link between relationship quality and health (see Figure 1). For instance, what are the developmental processes and situational factors (e.g., warmth in early family environments) that contribute to current relationship perceptions? This work is being done in collaboration with Drs. Timothy Smith, Brian Baucom, and Samantha Joel (University of Utah) and Dr. Joseph Allen (University of Virginia). Given the evidence for the model to date, I am also interested in examining how one might decrease relationship ambivalence and increase social support and facilitate positive health outcomes. I plan to submit NIH grants to conduct proof of concept interventions to increase relationship quality and decrease cardiovascular disease risk.

My future work will also increasing incorporate meta-analytic procedures and reviews. The importance of such reviews is apparent to help establish the reliability and effect sizes associated with social processes and health. These reviews are also great lab projects given the importance of such reviews for academic training. I anticipate doing at least one meta-analysis a year to draw firm conclusions on the status of a particular area of research on social relationships and health; thus allowing the field to begin moving to the next important questions.

Although I am generally happy with the resources to conduct my work, I do wish I could free up more time to concentrate on getting my grants funded and advancing my program of research into intervention work. I think the only place where time could be gained would be in reducing my service roles but I realize that my senior status makes me a prime candidate for such roles.

Teaching

Please see my Teaching Statement for information on my approach to undergraduate and graduate education. In terms of my future plans, I would like to continue to develop my online course in Health Psychology. I did an extensive redevelopment of this course for an online platform with help from Drs. Friedrich and Sansone, as well as the CTLE. I would like to continue to refine and improve this course over the next few years. I also wish to continue teaching my other regular graduate courses (i.e., Grant Writing, Stress and Health).

Service

Besides my other departmental, college, and university service (see my Curriculum Vitae), I have been Associate Chair for 2 years under Cindy Berg, 3 years under Carol Sansone, and am committed to serve in this role for Lisa Aspinwall next year. I am hoping after this to have less of a central service role so that I can focus more on my research goals. In particular, as noted above I would like to concentrate on getting my grants funded and begin the next phase of my program of research.