Supervisor Name: Anne Berndl

Project Title: Causes of preterm birth in people with spina bifida

Hospital/Research Institution: Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Email: anne.berndl@sunnybrook.ca

Field of Research (2 keywords): Spina Bifida, pregnancy

Department: Obstetrics and Gynecology

School of Graduate Studies Appointment (IMS, LMP, IHPME etc)? Yes/No:

If YES, please name:
**Brief Project Description (<300 words):**

Background: There is minimal information surrounding pregnancy outcomes in people with spina bifida, however more people with spina bifida are choosing to be pregnant. People with spina bifida appear to be at increased risk of preterm birth; and are more likely to have risk factors for both spontaneous and indicated preterm birth such as pyelonephritis, respiratory morbidity and intensive care admission. It is currently unknown why people with spina bifida are at increased risk of preterm birth, and if these births are spontaneous or indicated due to maternal or fetal medical concerns.

Objectives: The primary objective of this study is to better understand the underlying etiology of preterm birth in people with spina bifida, and categorize them as spontaneous or indicated.

Methodology: This study will make use of the Spina Bifida Reproductive Health and Pregnancy Study data, a cross sectional online international survey with detailed outcomes from 211 pregnancies from people with spina bifida. A descriptive analysis of causes of preterm birth will be performed.

Outcomes:

A detailed description of causes of preterm birth in people with spina bifida will be created, and delineated into spontaneous and indicated birth. Rates of preterm labour leading to birth can then be compared to rates of pregnancy, maternal or fetal complications resulting in preterm birth. By better understanding the etiology of preterm birth in this medically complex population, preconception counselling and prenatal care can be tailored to address these concerns.