# Social Science

## Impacting stress

There is a huge gap between the development of effective programs in university research centers and the actual delivery of these programs to the public. Bridging this gap between research and practice in the area of preventive mental health is a major focus of research at the ASU Prevention Research Center directed by Regents' Professor Irwin Sandler. Over the past two decades, supported by the National Institute for Mental Health, researchers at the Center including Sandler and Professors Sharlene Wolchik, Sanford Braver and Nancy Gonzales have been developing and testing programs to prevent the development of mental health problems for children who are adapting to stressful situations in which many children develop problems. Their studies have produced remarkable results. For example, Professor Wolchik found that children whose divorced mothers participated in a parenting program experienced fewer mental health and substance use problems and better grades and higher self-esteem six years after the program was completed.

Now Sandler, Wolchik and Braver are collaborating with the local court system and other courts around the nation to develop and test approaches to make this program available to divorcing parents who need it, as part of the process of getting a divorce. There are many challenges to making this happen, but the ASU Prevention Center in collaboration with their court partners are systematically working on ways to meet these challenges and to bridge the gap from programs that work in the laboratory to services that benefit children in our communities. LEARN MORE: www.asu.edu/clas/asuprc

## Collaborative computing

The Institute for Computing, Information Sciences and Engineering (InCISE) fosters computer science and applications of data acquisition, analysis, and management along with security, modeling, visualization, and interpretation in interdisciplinary research, education and entrepreneurship. InCISE has successfully fostered inter- and transdisciplinary research using this informatics and computer science foundation, and has led to creation of ASU's new School of Computing and Informatics, comprised of Computer Science and Biomedical Informatics departments and a new program in Informatics.

The research foci of the new School of Computing and Informatics align well with the mission of InCISE and its efforts to leverage selective investments in collaborative, interdisciplinary projects and build partnerships between researchers, improve visibility with funding agencies, and produce successful larger scale collaborative proposals that would not be possible using traditional approaches which emphasize individual researchers.

Sethuraman Panchanathan, Director of the School of Computing and Informatics and chair of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, leads InCISE as Director, with Jeremy Rowe of the School of Computing and Informatics as Associate Director. InCISE and SCI will continue to evolve and to identify, promote and enable innovative collaborations to take on new challenges and meet the demands of research collaborators and our communities. LEARN MORE: incise.asu.edu

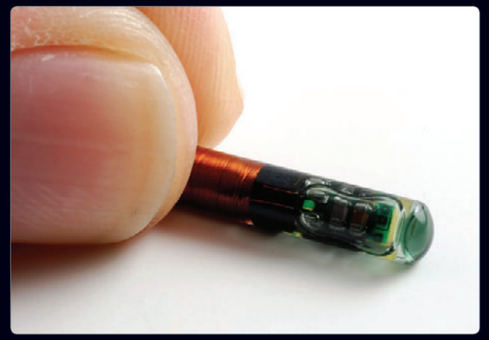
## QUESTIONING HI-TECH SOLUTIONS

Radio frequency identification (RFID) implants can mean life or death for some hospital patients. These glass-encased microchips are implanted into consenting patient's arms and contain a unique number that allows hospital staff to scan the arms of patients and retrieve their medical records through an online database. Ideally, the implants allow hospital staff to quickly access medical records, medical history, allergies, etc. and begin treatment right away. But could this potentially life-saving technology have negative social implications?

Jill A. Fisher of Women and Gender Studies and Torin Monahan of the School of Justice and Social Inquiry have conducted interviews with hospital staff and patients about their perceptions and uses of the RFID implants. The study, funded by the National Science Foundation, found that the implants possess the potential to attenuate the importance of social context and human interaction in hospitals because they situate people in relation to information systems that reduce personal identity or experience into data.

"The risk is that patients will be further managed by means of abstract data rather than in their full human complexity," Monahan said.

For example, if a patient's medical history and records can be obtained by scanning an embedded chip, medical staff may not listen as attentively to what a patient is saying about his or her history or current complaints because the RFID system can provide information that is seen as much more objective and accurate.



Monahan and Fisher intend to answer many critical questions about the use of RFID implants throughout the course of their research: Does this technology make our lives easier or not? Do we feel constrained or enabled? Are we more secure or less secure?

"When we're analyzing the social implications of surveillance technologies, it's easy to assume that we're negative about all of the current and potential uses," Fisher said. "It's not so much that as the fact that we feel it's important to bring people's attention to this issue and the way it may affect their everyday lives and interactions within our society."