

PDA Update



June 2008

HSPH PDA Council

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President

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Joy Crowther,
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Alison Williams,
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Tanja Sendzik,
Social Events Chair

Lior Horonchik,
Workshop Chair

Richard Wamai,
International Chair

Trang Nguyen,
Recruiting Chair

Contact the Council at
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PDA Membership

Did you know? If you are a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health, you are already a member of the HSPH PDA! And, you may continue your membership in the PDA for an additional two years as an HSPH Research Associate. The best part – you get all of the HSPH PDA resources, networking, workshops, and social events for free!

About Us

The HSPH Postdoctoral Association (PDA) was founded in May 2007, and is organized and run by postdocs like you! Its purpose? To “enhance the HSPH postdoc experience” by providing opportunities for HSPH postdocs to develop their careers through relevant workshops and seminars, to network at postdoc gatherings, to provide support and collaboration with each other, and of course, to have fun!

Goings-On

Wondering what the PDA does? Here's a recap of last month's events ...

Poster Day

The annual HSPH Poster and Exhibit Day was held May 1. Congratulations to postdoc poster winners **Kihwa Kang** et al. for their poster “Critical roles of tissue-derived Th2 cytokines and myeloid PPAR δ in resident macrophage polarization and insulin sensitivity” and **Sonny Nguyen** et al. for their poster “Maternal asthma causes epigenetic changes of IL4 and IFN-g promoters in asthma-susceptible T cells”.

Grant Seminars, Part 4

Part four of a grant writing series sponsored by the HSPH PDA and the HSPH Postdoctoral Advisory Committee was held on May 12. In this session, we talked about what happens when your grant doesn't get funded the first time around: the resubmission process! Stay tuned for the final seminar in the series.

Fast Pitch

If you missed our Fast Pitch network event on May 14, you missed a lot! This afternoon get-together started with time for everyone to mix and mingle with snacks and drinks, and then three great groups of postdocs presented 2-slide overviews of their research (with time to mix and chat between groups)! Here's a quick review:

Tanja Sendzik uses EST/siRNA-based gene silencing to identify macrophage resistance mechanisms against *Franciscella tularensis*. **Vindya Kumarapeli** studies the effects of human rabies control strategies that have been implemented in Sri Lanka. **Hiroo Ide** presented the results of his pediatric physician workforce study in Japan. **Oliver Kayser-Herold** showed computational approaches for modeling normal and asthmatic muscle motion. **Anne Lusk** addresses obesity and global warming by focusing on bicycle travel corridors for people who don't want to bicycle with the cars, where social destinations are the reward.

Sonny Nguyen uses epigenetics to study how asthma risk is increased in offspring of asthmatic mothers. **Naoki Kondo** looks at how cultural, political, and socioeconomic factors, such as social networks and perceived deprivations, affect the overall health of older adults. **Andreas Sandgren** is investigating the role of host iron metabolism in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (TB) infection, as well as studying TB drug resistance. **Krish Atmakuri** also studies TB, and is identifying virulence effectors translocated by TB into macrophages through its specialized protein secretion machinery.

Trang Nguyen studies airway smooth muscle mechanical function in asthma using optical magnetic cytometry and traction microscopy to probe cell stiffness and contractility. **Yelena Margolin** uses a combination of peptide purification using a TiO₂/C18 system with liquid chromatography to characterize phospho-protein proteomes. **Richard Wamai**, who recently published in *Science*, reviews new evidence of effectiveness, costs and cost-effectiveness for implementation of HIV prevention strategies and programs in resource-constrained settings. **Mayumi Shimizu** is surveying the current state of maternity care for normal labor and delivery at public health facilities in

Go Green

Help us make HSPH a more environmentally-friendly institution!

To opt out of campus mail delivery, simply [email us](#) with "opt out" in the subject line. If you opt out of campus delivery, you will still receive an electronic copy of the PDA Update each month.

If you want to continue receiving both the electronic and printed versions of the *PDA Update* each month, you do not need to do anything - you will continue to receive the PDA Update by email and campus mail, just like you already do.

Please Recycle!

Office of Faculty Affairs

Questions about your appointment, benefits or ID card? Contact [Debbie Mattina](#) (or 617-432-1327) in the Office of Faculty Affairs. The office's postdoc website is also available [here](#).

Career Services

Looking for a job? The Career Services Office (CSO) posts career opportunities on CareerConnect, and it's free for you! Click on "Find a Job, Internship, or Fellowship" on their [website](#). Need a user name and password? Email your request to [Margarita Ramos](#) in the CSO.

Senegal, including adverse outcomes, to identify areas of potential improvement and reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

A great big "thank you" to all of our wonderful speakers! It was a great success – we hope to see you at the next one!

PDA Elections

Thank you to everyone who voted in the PDA Council Elections. Also, a very big thank you to all those that ran for office - we had a great group of candidates this year!

The newly elected Council will take office in the middle of June. Those officers are...

President: Andreas Sandgren

Vice President: Alison Williams

Treasurer: Alexia Smith

Secretary: Sanjukta Ghosh

Publicity/PR Chair: Joy Crowther

Webmaster: Alison Williams

Social Events Chair: Tanja Sendzik

Workshop Chair: Anne Lusk

International Chair: Sara Lindström

Recruiting Chair: Joe Nabhan

Annual Report

A recap of the HSPH PDA's first year, by President Andreas Sandgren.

Our History

In February 2007, the first step toward founding the HSPH PDA was to invite all interested HSPH postdocs to a series of meetings to determine their interest in such an association, let them share their thoughts about what the association should be, and begin the work of forming the association. We had our first official PDA Council meeting on May 30, 2007, with a core group of seven enthusiastic volunteers, who appointed themselves as the first Council. Open Council elections were held in May 2008 for all Council officer positions, with all HSPH PDA members eligible for election to the Council for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. The new Council consists of eleven members.

Our Accomplishments

Our first year as a PDA has been filled with several accomplishments:

Association development

- We ratified our bylaws on March 6, 2008. Through this process, we received recognition as an official Harvard organization.
- The results of our HSPH postdoc survey in May 2007 (response rate 50%) directed the PDA towards specific needs of our diverse HSPH postdoc community, namely, career development workshops and social networking events.
- We established a successful collaboration with the HSPH Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA), which funded the majority of our activities during the past year.
- We recruited several new postdocs to the Council for the coming year and held a successful election with a voter participation rate of 17%.

Harvard Service

- Two representatives from the council served on the HSPH Postdoctoral Advisory Committee (PAC). A central accomplishment of the PAC this year was two documents that serve as a tool to strengthen the postdoc mentoring at HSPH.
- We developed three effective routes of communication with our members: a PDA website hosted by HSPH, an e-mail list of all HSPH postdocs, and the newsletter *PDA Update* distributed monthly by email and campus mail to all HSPH postdocs.

Events and Awards

- We hosted several successful social and networking events. In collaboration with OFA and PAC, we also developed a curriculum for several postdoc-targeted workshops.
- PDA Council members participated at the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) Annual Meeting held in Boston May 25 – 27, 2008. The poster presented by Andreas Sandgren received the Outstanding

Dependent Care Fund

The Dependent Care Fund for Short-term Professional Travel (DCF) provides financial assistance to scholars who would like to travel for a professional event that will advance their academic careers, and who also have child care or adult dependent care obligations. DCF grants are awarded to defray the incremental costs due to added care-giving needs incurred as a result of traveling for career purposes.

Funds are available on a competitive basis to faculty and benefits-eligible postdoctoral fellows. The next application deadline is June 2, 2008. Additional applications will be accepted in early fall.

Complete information and application forms are available [online](#).

PDA Online

The PDA is on the web! Find us at <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/pda>, where you can get information about the PDA, find upcoming events, read back issues of the PDA Update, and more!

Poster Presentation Award for the poster "Strengthening the mentoring of postdocs at Harvard School of Public Health".

Our Future

As the HSPH PDA looks ahead, we will continue to develop and strengthen the PDA. We will maintain successful collaborations with our supporters, in particular OFA. In addition, we will reach out to all the individual departments of the school to ensure postdoctoral issues are on the faculty's and administrators' agenda. The newly elected Council will build upon its good relationships with all HSPH departments, maintain diversity and equal representation by Council members from these departments, and further expand our projects and activities to benefit the HSPH postdoc community. In particular, we will focus on encouraging high quality postdoc mentoring by HSPH faculty. Our collaboration with the PAC will continue, supported by regular surveys of the postdocs to monitor the use of our mentoring tools and satisfaction with the mentoring. As our association continues to grow, your suggestions and comments are critical for our success. We always welcome volunteers; non-officer members can be appointed to the Council throughout the year.

Upcoming events

There are no HSPH PDA workshops or social events this month.

Fight the Stipend Freeze!

Together with the NPA, we are asking postdocs to contact their leaders in Congress to address the current NIH postdoctoral stipends. (Even if you're not supported by an NIH training grant, most life science departments across Harvard use the NIH postdoc salary matrix as a general guide.) See [this site](#) for more details. Together we can make a difference!

Postdoc Survey

Help shape the PDA and other postdoc-related groups and activities at HSPH! The PDA and the HSPH Postdoc Advisory Committee will be performing a

survey of all HSPH postdocs by email **June 23 - July 3**.

Free Career Counseling

Harvard's Office for Postdoctoral Affairs is offering individual general and career counseling to Harvard postdocs on Friday mornings in the Longwood area **now through June 27**. To request an appointment, call 617-432-6735.

Internations

InterNations is a social networking platform that connects expatriates all over the world, and also builds up local communities. Connect online and in real life too. To join, follow [this link](#) (information and invitation link provided by the HMS PDA).