

Chair's Chatter January 28, 2022

Looks like we're in for a major nor'easter snowstorm tonight and tomorrow, an expected feature of New England winters. While you are digging out, take heart that Ground Hog's Day is Tuesday and Spring may be here in a few months. Meanwhile sip some tea or if you're feeling adventurous, build a snowman!

This marked the first week of classes for the Spring semester. I know that the faculty and students are excited to be back for in-person classes. It is a joy to feel the energy of having our students back on campus!

I want to recognize Jeff Fredberg, who will be cutting back after 34 years at Harvard. Fortunately for us, he will still be continuing as Director of our MIPS program, working on grants, and serving as Director of the T32 *Training in Interdisciplinary Pulmonary Sciences* grant. As a matter of fact, not much will change, except that Jeff's official title will now be *Research Professor* rather than *Professor* of Bioengineering and Physiology. Still, it is well worth taking a moment now to acknowledge this transition and to thank Jeff for his tremendous contributions to the MIPS Program, the EH Department, and the School.

Longxiang Li and colleagues had a ground-breaking [study](#) published yesterday in *Nature Energy* showing that elderly people living near or downwind of unconventional oil and gas development (fracking) are at higher risk of early death. Congratulations to Longxiang and Francesca Dominici, Annelise J. Blomberg, Falco J. Bargagli-Stoffi, Joel D. Schwartz, Brent A. Coull, John D. Spengler, Yaguang Wei, Joy Lawrence, and Petros Koutrakis on this impressive work.

Also on Wednesday, a comprehensive [study](#) examining potential health risks from low levels of air pollution exposure in 68.5 million older Americans by Francesca Dominici, Antonella Zanobetti, Joel Schwartz and colleagues was published by the *Health Effects Institute*. They report increased risks of mortality at the lowest levels of exposure to PM2.5. This study should be important in the upcoming PM2.5 NAAQS review by EPA.

Wendy Purcell has been appointed as a Visiting Professor at the University College London Global Business School for Health. She recently submitted a book to Bloomsbury Press entitled *Handbook of Sustainability in Higher Education: An Agenda for Transformational Change*. Well done Wendy.

Congratulations to Chimwemwe Mwase, who was awarded the Barry R. and Irene Tilenius Bloom Fellowship for 2021-22. This fellowship is awarded to Harvard Chan students or fellows based on their academic achievements, leadership potential, and commitment to improving public health in fields and areas of the world in greatest need.

Check out the upcoming events next week. I would highlight the *Donald Hopkins Scholars Lecture "The Quest for Environmental and Climate Justice"* by Dr. Robert Bullard and moderated by Tamarra James-Todd on Tuesday, and our *Planetary Health Colloquium "How*

Accelerating Environmental Change is Impacting the Mental Health of Different Populations”
on Wednesday.

Please send any news or events you want me to include to eh-chatter@hsph.harvard.edu .

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, February 1 (9:30 – 10:30 AM ET)

MIPS Work-in-Progress Seminar Series

“Epigenetic and Metabolomic Changes in Response to Environmental Exposures in the Normative Aging Study”

Speaker: Joel Schwartz, PhD, Professor of Environmental Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Zoom link:

<https://harvard.zoom.us/j/95915233377?pwd=ZF15N3JwZUNKSEhtd0Rxa2h1Y2ZBUT09>

Tuesday, February 1 (1:00 – 2:00 PM ET)

ORARC Education Sessions: IRB Basics for All (Basic and Student Session)

Presenters: Amy Harchelroad, QA/QI Specialist, ORARC and Alyssa Speier, QIP Director, ORARC

Learn how to determine which kind of IRB determination your study will receive. This presentation will cover Not Human Subjects Research, and Exemption determinations as well as when reviews are conducted on an Expedited basis vs. by the Convened IRB (“Full Board” review). This session will also touch on specific information for, including common road blocks (and how to avoid them), FAQs, recommendations, as well as students conducting human research.

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/irb-basics-for-all-registration-253405772487>

Tuesday, February 1 (1:00 – 2:00 PM ET)

The Quest for Environmental and Climate Justice: 2nd Annual Donald Hopkins Scholars Lecture

Speaker: Dr. Robert Bullard, Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy, Texas Southern University, Director of Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice

Moderator: Dr. Tamarra James-Todd

“America is still segregated, and so is pollution.” -Dr. Robert Bullard

Every day, poor people and communities of color contend with disproportionate health risks due to toxic exposures. Robert Bullard, dubbed the “father of environmental justice,” has spent more than five decades spotlighting this burden of unequal environmental protections. During the second annual Donald Hopkins Scholars Lecture, Dr. Bullard will explore the ways that justice, sustainability, and human rights are inextricably linked—and how ultimately, combating climate change and environmental degradation means fighting racism and seeking justice for our most vulnerable populations.

Register: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1XfYwOMNrUIWY1E

Wednesday, February 2 (1:00 – 2:00 PM ET)

Planetary Health Colloquium – How Accelerating Environmental Change is Impacting the Mental Health of Different Populations

The Departments of Environmental Health, Global Health and Population, Immunology and Infectious Diseases, and Nutrition, along with Harvard University Center for the Environment, the Harvard Global Health Institute, Planetary Health Alliance, and the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils Network (EEAC) warmly welcome Frederick Stoddard, Caroline Hickman and Ashlee Cunsolo as the fifth speakers of the Planetary Health Colloquium Series, Lise Van Susteren will be the discussant.

Register: [://harvard.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJctfumvqz4oH9OFVqJvFTVjqptCoCJNvpbc](https://harvard.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJctfumvqz4oH9OFVqJvFTVjqptCoCJNvpbc)

Wednesday, February 9 (1:00-2:00 PM ET)

Harvard Chan-NIEHS Center Colloquium Series: The Social Cost of Water Pollution

Speaker: [Catherine L. Kling, PhD](#), Tisch University Professor in the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management and Faculty Director at the Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future at Cornell University

Please join us for the next installment of our 2021-22 Colloquium Series on *Re-envisioning the Environment: Diverse Voices in Environmental Health*. This event will be held via **Zoom only**.

More information: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/niehs/event/hsph-niehs-colloquium-series-catherine-kling-phd/>

Join by Zoom: <http://hsph.me/colloquium2021>

Chair Chatter January 21, 2022

We look forward to welcoming students and faculty back for on-site classes next week as we begin the spring semester. It will be nice to see faces again, even if they are masked! As you know from emails the school and university have sent out, the school is taking the safety of our community seriously. Please observe all the [precautionary guidelines](#). By the way, I was told that the link to add/change/delete the school's COVID testing cadence in last week's Chatter was broken. [This one should work](#). We know that many members of our community have had to deal with omicron, whether directly themselves or with friends or family. To those affected, please let us know if we can help.

We would like to welcome long-time friend and colleague Professor Murray Mittleman, who is now officially a Faculty Affiliate in the Department of Environmental Health. His primary appointment remains in the Department of Epidemiology. Murray is also the Program Director of the MPH Degree at Harvard Chan.

Congratulations to Dorota Weziak-Bialowolska, Piotr Bialowolski, Tyler VanderWeele, and Eileen McNeely whose paper entitled "[Character Strengths Involving an Orientation to Promote Good Can Help Your Health and Well-Being. Evidence From two Longitudinal Studies](#)" was named 2021 Paper of the Year by the American Journal of Health Promotion. It was also featured in a [Harvard Gazette](#) article. Well done, SHINE team!

Ari Bernstein's study "[Warm Season and Emergency Department Visits to U.S. Children's Hospitals](#)" was featured in the [New York Times](#) this week. This study showed hotter temperatures in late spring and summer were associated with higher rates of emergency-room visits for children across the United States.

Finally, we send best wishes to Joe Brain who celebrated his birthday this week.

Please send any news or events you want me to include to eh-chatter@hsph.harvard.edu.

Upcoming Events

Monday, January 24 (1:10 – 1:50 PM ET)

NIOSH Education and Research Center, Environmental and Occupational Medicine and Epidemiology Program, Monday Seminar Series

“Prenatal arsenic exposure and spina bifida risk in Bangladesh: The role of gene-environment interaction”

Speaker: Chih-Fu Wei, MD, PhD candidate, Department of Environmental Health

Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to 1) discuss the possible role of arsenic exposure in spina bifida; 2) describe the possible role of genetic architecture in spina bifida; and to 3) explain approaches for identifying gene-environmental interactions among children with spina bifida.

Register:

https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6hZi6pUiSKLXIDs

Tuesday, January 25 (9:30 – 10:30 PM ET)

MIPS Work-in-Progress Seminar Series

Speaker: Paul Dieffenbach “Vascular Stiffness and Mechanical Signaling in Pulmonary Hypertension.”

Zoom link:

<https://harvard.zoom.us/j/95915233377?pwd=ZF15N3JwZUNKSEhtd0Rxa2h1Y2ZBUT09>

Thursday, January 27 (12:00 – 1:30 PM ET)

Specific Aims Review Sessions

The NIEHS Center’s Specific Aims Session is open to investigators at all levels with upcoming grant submissions. A panel of faculty members offer their critique of and suggestions for improving Specific Aims sections for junior faculty and post docs in a friendly, constructive, open session. Open to all members, collaborators and their trainees.

If you would like your document reviewed, please send it to niehsctr@hsph.harvard.edu by 5pm on the Monday before the session. Your confirmation email will include the Zoom link to participate.

For the Thursday, January 27th session, **please submit by Monday, January 24th.**

Thursday, January 27 (12:00 – 1:00 PM ET)

How to Talk to a Climate Skeptic

Back by popular demand, this interactive workshop explores the attitudes and motivations that prevent people from supporting actions to stop burning fossil fuels. This workshop, led by Harvard Chan C-CHANGE Interim Director Dr. Aaron Bernstein, aims to help the Harvard community identify strategies, including effective communication, to use when engaging climate skepticism.

Register:

https://harvard.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAuf-igqzMjG9Cr0JT5CPweJRXDC3n-cXaJ/success?user_id=dZvvgolBTAGsWiuGpcI9vQ&timezone_id=America%2FNew_York

Wednesday, February 2 (1:00 – 2:00 PM ET)

Planetary Health Colloquium – How Accelerating Environmental Change is Impacting the Mental Health of Different Populations

The Departments of Environmental Health, Global Health and Population, Immunology and Infectious Diseases, and Nutrition, along with Harvard University Center for the Environment, the Harvard Global Health Institute, Planetary Health Alliance, and the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils Network (EEAC) warmly welcome Frederick Stoddard, Caroline Hickman and Ashlee Cunsolo as the fifth speakers of the Planetary Health Colloquium Series, Lise Van Susteren will be the discussant.

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Chair Chatter

Friday, January 14, 2022

Welcome to the deep freeze in New England! January is here with a vengeance, as is the Omicron virus, unfortunately. It has hit the world, our country, and our Harvard community hard. The good news is the data show a sharp downturn in the level of virus in the sewage system, which indicates Omicron may have reached its peak and may be on a decline in a couple of weeks. We can only hope! In any case the School is still planning to hold classes on-site starting with the spring semester. As to the weather, well, we may have to wait a little longer for it to warm up.

For those returning to campus, check [here](#) to find the latest information and the latest School policies that have been changing often as we adjust to whatever Covid throws at us to keep our community as safe as possible. For those that need to add, change, or delete their COVID testing cadence (frequency of tests) for on-site access, please fill out [this form](#).

Congratulations to Jaime Hart, who was elected as Councilor of the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE) for a three year term starting this month. Jaime will be serving with our colleague Andrea Baccarelli who is beginning his term as ISEE president.

Congratulations also to Francesca Dominici, who is the recipient of the 2022 Mosteller Statistician of the Year Award from the Boston Chapter of the American Statistical Association. We are pleased to see Francesca recognized as a distinguished statistician and for her work with our department as a colleague, collaborator, and mentor.

Upcoming Events

Friday, January 14 (1:00 – 3:00 pm ET)

Winter Term Mini Series: Part 2 - You Have the Data, but Can you See the Story?

Speaker: Katherine S Rowell, MS, MHA, Co-founder and Principal, HealtDataViz, LLC.

This presentation is of interest to all faculty, staff and students. Ms Rowell will discuss the research around how we process information that informs best practices of data visualization. She will discuss the four shapes that when used alone or in combination create clear visualizations and will differentiate between charts and graphs that use best practices and those that do not.

Register:

https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9HnEf1XvH9M6pMy

Friday, January 14 (4:00 – 5:00 PM ET)

Pulmonary Work-in-Progress

Speaker #1: Gu Li, M.D. (Liu/Perrella)

“Disruption of SPEG Leads to Mitochondrial Dysfunction in the Developing Mouse Heart in part by a Reduction in Phosphorylated PGC-1alpha”

Speaker #2: Filiz Korkmaz, Ph.D. (Quinton, UMass Med)
“LOX-1-Dependent Immune Regulation During Pneumonia”

Zoom link:

<https://partners.zoom.us/j/85659453504?pwd=UzZ4QTdNL3ZkSDJUbg5rWjUwMFRYQT09>

Dial in: 1 646 876 9923 **Meeting ID:** 856 5945 3504 **Passcode:** 826557

Tuesday, January 18 (9:30 – 10:30 PM ET)

MIPS Work-in-Progress Seminar Series

Speaker: Jeffrey Fredberg “Cell Jamming and the Origins of Order”

Zoom link:

<https://harvard.zoom.us/j/95915233377?pwd=ZF15N3JwZUNKSEhtd0Rxa2h1Y2ZBUT09>

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Register:

[://harvard.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJctfumvqz4oH9OFVqJvFTVjqptCoCJNvpbc](https://harvard.zoom.us/j/91234567890)

Chair's Chatter

January 7, 2022

Welcome to 2022! I hope you all had a nice break and had a chance to enjoy some well-deserved time off to relax and recharge.

Also I hope the Omicron surge did not put too much of a damper on your festivities. The steps we have taken here at the school have been very effective. During the fall semester, I was only notified of one positive case in our department. However, since returning this week we have been notified of several other positive tests. Please continue to do your best to stay safe!

With Omicron hitting our community, anyone with questions or who suspects they may have been exposed should go to Harvard's main COVID website page <https://www.harvard.edu/coronavirus/>. It explains how to report if you test positive, have symptoms, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive. (You can use the Crimson Clear app to report it to HUHS). Let's hope Corona is in the rearview mirror by this time next year!

Congratulations to Xinan Wang who successfully defended her doctoral thesis entitled *Discovery of smoking-related biomarkers for advanced treatment in non-small cell lung cancer* on Tuesday.

There are currently several stories on the school's website that feature members of the EH community. Adjunct Professor Philippe Grandjean discusses the [dangers of PFAS chemical to human health](#), and the need to develop policies to regulate them. He specifically discusses the Biden administration's proposals to regulate PFAS chemicals in drinking water.

Another story on the website is about the [school's pedagogy fellow program](#) featuring Lead Pedagogy Fellow Katie Tomsho. The story explains the unique role that the pedagogy fellows play in supporting faculty and teaching assistants to deliver the best possible instructional experience for students.

A third story features PhD candidate Barrak Alahmad, whose work explores [the effects of heat and pollution on human health](#), particularly in countries in the middle east such as Kuwait. With the increasing severity of dust storms and a warming climate, his work with Petros Koutrakis is vital to the well-being of millions of people in that region.

As always, please email news and upcoming events that you would like me to share in the next Chair's Chatter here: eh-chatter@hsph.harvard.edu. Also, the Department of Environmental Health is back on twitter! Be sure to follow us at [@HarvardEnvHlth](#). If you would like us to share any news, events or updates on twitter or in Department Notes, please submit details [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Friday, January 7, 2022 (1:00 – 2:00 pm ET)
Winter Term Mini Series: Part 1 – Health Data Accessibility
Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations

Speaker: Jamie Spear, Digital Accessibility Consultant, HUIT Digital Accessibility Services

Participants will be able to 1) assess accessibility of materials (both new and existing) using Microsoft's Accessibility Checker; 2) write alt text for complex images and diagrams; 3) review reading order of slide content to prepare it to be read by assistive technology

Preregister: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6EZH0keVDMg0jv8

Friday, January 7, 2022 (4:00 - 5:00 pm ET)

Pulmonary WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Speaker #1: Bina Choi, M.D. (Washko)

"Outcomes in Quantitative Interstitial Abnormality Progression"

Speaker #2: Will Feldman, M.D., D.Phil. (Kesselheim/Avorn)

"Patents and regulatory exclusivities on nebulizer treatments for asthma and COPD"

Zoom:

<https://partners.zoom.us/j/85659453504?pwd=UzZ4QTdNL3ZkSDJUbG5rWjUwMFRYQT09>

Dial in: 1 646 876 9923 ; **Meeting ID:** 856 5945 3504; **Passcode:** 826557

Friday, January 14, 2022 (1:00 – 3:00 pm ET)

Winter Term Mini Series: Part 2 – Health Data Visualization

Speaker: Katherine Rowell, of HealthDataViz, LLC of Boston

In this two-hour session, Ms. Rowell will use case studies from our faculty and students to elucidate best practices for visualizing health data and will ground her presentation of these practices in the science around vision and cognition.

Preregister: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6EZH0keVDMg0jv8

