

# Epicenter

Department of Epidemiology Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 6, November 2016



The Department of Epidemiology hosted a welcome back outing for students & faculty on Boston's Whale Watch Harbor Cruise

# Student Updates

◇ Doctoral candidate, **Dale Barnhart**, recently had a publication, “Intra-cluster correlation estimates for HIV-related outcomes” accepted into Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications, with Ellen Hertzmark and Donna Spiegelman of the Epidemiology Department, Enju Liu, Ester Mungure, David Sando, Till Bärnighausen, and Wafaie Fawzi of the Global Health and Population Department, and Aisa N. Muya, Guerino Chalamilla, and Nzovu Ulenga of Management and Development of Health.

◇ **Laura Schummers**, a doctoral candidate in the Reproductive, Perinatal, and Pediatric concentration received funding on an F31 grant titled “Absolute risks of adverse of pregnancy outcomes according to maternal age and inter-pregnancy interval: interpretable results to guide clinical practice and patient decisionmaking” with [Dr. Sonia Hernandez-Diaz](#) as the sponsor, as well as published the following manuscript

**Schummers L**, Himes KP, Bodnar LM, Hutcheon JA. Predictor characteristics necessary for building a clinically useful risk prediction model: A simulation study. BMC Medical Research Methodology. 2016;16:123 DOI 10.1186/s12874-016-0223-2

◇ **Samantha Molsberry**, a PhD candidate in Population Health Sciences presented at the 2016 International Symposium on Neurovirology in Toronto, Canada. The presentation was titled “Neuropsychological Phenotypes Among Men With and Without HIV Disease in the Multi-center AIDS Cohort Study”.

◇ **Mollie Barnard**, a Doctoral Candidate was awarded a NIH/NCI F99 Fellowship grant on the project titled “Inflammation and gynecologic cancer: the role of prostaglandins in ovarian cancer.”



Laura Schummers



Mollie Barnard

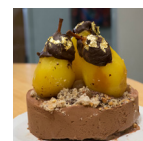


Samantha Molsberry

**Katherine Howe** was a consultant for the World Health Organization in the Department of Nutrition. She and Harvard Medical School postdoctoral fellow alumnus, **Dr. Sandro Demaio**, conducted a mixed methods study on the health system's response to the management of overweight and obesity in children and adolescents in tertiary centers worldwide. They hope that the results from the WHO report and paper will provide guidance for public health policymakers, implementers of national nutrition programs, organizations managing nutrition action plans, health managers, and health professionals. At the end of summer, she also instructed a public health nano-course on social and behavioral health, obesity prevention, and cardiovascular disease at the Harvard Center Shanghai. Meanwhile, she is leading a research project on the health impact of playing *Pokémon Go* with [Dr. Christian Suharlim](#) under the mentorship of her adviser, [Dr. Eric Rimm](#), and [Dr. Ichiro Kawachi](#).



## Epi in the Fall



# Alumni Spotlight



**Brittany Charlton, MSc, ScD**  
Instructor,  
Boston Children's Hospital and  
Harvard Medical School

I was raised in Sonoma County, California by parents who met at UC Berkeley in the 1960s. My family's dinnertime discussions often focused on ways to create positive change, which sparked my interest in social justice movements—particularly around gay rights and reproductive health. Being educated in a Waldorf school cemented values of acceptance, inclusion, and egalitarianism. As a teenager, I began reading critical theorists like Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, which compelled me to think about ways that sex/gender and sexuality were linked to health.

Wanting a progressive, liberal arts education, I attended The New School in New York City. The college's strong social science foundation helped me to explore my passion for lessening health inequities. My first exposure to public health research happened in college with my senior thesis on sexual minority (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual [LGB]) health disparities. At that time, I also began to tie my academic efforts to public health practice. I promoted a number

of health issues on Capitol Hill while working in the U.S. House and Senate before moving onto advocacy efforts while working for organizations like the Center for Reproductive Rights. I also had some clinical exposure during my year of national service through AmeriCorps at an LGBT community health center, where I ran a cervical cancer-screening program and coached women through birth as a doula.

Next, I needed advanced quantitative training to pursue my research interests. Bert Hofman taught my first epidemiology course at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and his enthusiasm coupled with active learning methods made me see the potential of epidemiological methods. I went on to complete both my masters and doctoral degrees in the Department of Epidemiology with an eye toward research and teaching. My dissertation examined the long-term health impacts of contraceptive use. For example, I used data from the Nurses' Health Study I and II to explore associations between oral contraceptive use and outcomes such as mortality and reproductive cancers (e.g., breast, cervical). Acting as a teaching assistant, I was able to watch Julie Buring and others gracefully model different ways to mold the next generation of epidemiologists, which informed my own teaching philosophy. In the Department's doctoral seminar led by Meir Stampfer, Eric Rimm, Gary Curhan, and Lorelei Mucci, I started to hone my research and grant writing skills, which helped me to execute and fund my postdoctoral fellowship and early career development award.

Those initial grants enabled me to complete the Postdoctoral Fellowship in Sexual Orientation and Health Disparities Research under Bryn Austin's supervision at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, where I am now an Instructor. My current NIH career development award is focused on exploring sexual orientation-related reproductive health disparities. Compared to their heterosexual peers, sexual minorities are particularly vulnerable to having poor reproductive health. It may seem counterintuitive, but my research has documented that sexual minority youth are as likely to have had intercourse with the opposite sex as their heterosexual peers, putting them at risk for a wide range of adverse reproductive health outcomes. Further research has revealed that sexual minorities are more likely to have a sexually transmitted infection but less likely to have received routine care such as a Pap test—primarily mediated by less health care access vis-à-vis hormonal contraceptive use. I have also documented a substantially elevated teen pregnancy risk among sexual minorities, for which I am continuing to explore risk factors. A number of current students from the Department are becoming involved in this research through practicum projects as well as a Fall 1 class that I am leading on gender and health. I'm eager to see these collaborations strengthen, and contribute to the robust reproductive epidemiology tradition in which I trained.

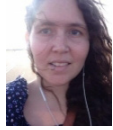
Check out Dr. Charlton's website for more information about her research  
[www.brittanycharlton.com](http://www.brittanycharlton.com)



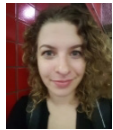
# Post-doc and Research Assistant Updates

**Dr. Sasha Gusev**, a post doctoral fellow in the Program in Genetic Epidemiology and Statistical Genetics has accepted a tenure track Assistant Professor position at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute /Harvard Medical School.

The Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics welcomed two new postdoctoral research fellows; Lauren Cowley and Samantha Palace.



- ◇ **Dr. Lauren Cowley** is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She is working with **Dr. Bill Hanage** in the Department on Epidemiology. Lauren is joining the School of Public Health from Public Health England(PHE) where she was based from 2012-2016 while she completed her PhD. The PhD was awarded from the University of Edinburgh in September 2016.

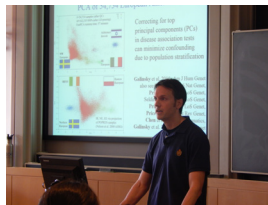


- ◇ **Dr. Samantha Palace** is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health working with **Drs. Marc Lipsitch** and **Yonatan Grad** in the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics and the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases. Her work focuses on understanding how bacteria minimize fitness costs associated with the acquisition of antimicrobial resistance, and whether these fitness costs can be exploited to improve the treatment or decrease the frequency of drug-resistant pneumococcal and gonococcal infections.

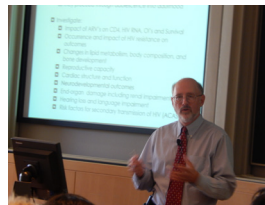
## Seminars in Epidemiology



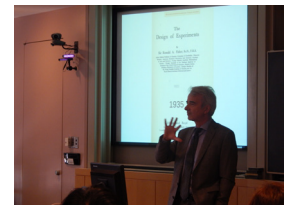
**Professor Sir Michael G. Marmot**



**Alkes Price, Ph.D**



**George Seage, ScD**



**Alfredo Morabia, MD, PhD**

## Recent Publications

Stunting in Infancy Is Associated with Decreased Risk of High Body Mass Index for Age at 8 and 12 Years of Age. **Christopher T Andersen**, Aryeh D Stein, Sarah A Reynolds, Jere R Behrman, Benjamin T Crookston, Kirk A Dearden, Mary E Penny, Whitney Schott, Lia CH Fernald. The Journal of Nutrition 2016

Transgender community voices: a participatory population perspective. **Reisner S**, Keatley J, Baral S, Villayzan J, Mothopeng T, Van der Merwe LL, Hosie A, **Chung C**. Lancet. 2016;

Laparoscopically Confirmed Endometriosis and Breast Cancer in the Nurses' Health Study II. **Farland LV**, **Tamimi RM**, **Eliassen AH**, **Spiegelman D**, **Hankinson SE**, **Chen WY**, **Missmer SA**. Obstet Gynecol. 2016 Oct 6.

Dissecting the genetics of complex traits using summary association statistics. Bogdan Pasaniuc, **Alkes L Price**

Zika vaccine trials. Sep 2016 **Lipsitch M**, Cowling BJ Science Sep 2016

Intrahost Evolution of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus USA300 Among Individuals With Reoccurring Skin and Soft-Tissue Infections. **Azarian T**, Daum RS, Petty LA, Steinbeck JL, Yin Z, Nolan D, Boyle-Vavra S, **Hanage WP**, Salemi M, David MZ. J Infect Dis. Sep 2016

Genetic Predictors of Cardiovascular Mortality During Intensive Glycemic Control in Type 2 Diabetes: Findings From the ACCORD Clinical Trial. **Hetal S. Shah**, He Gao, Mario Luca Morieri, Jan Skupien, Skylar Marvel, Guillaume Paré, Gaia C. Mannino, Patinut Buranasupkajorn, Christine Mendonca, Timothy Hastings, Santica M. Marcovina, Ronald J. Sigal, Hertz C. Gerstein, Michael J. Wagner, Alison A. Motsinger-Reif, John B. Buse, **Peter Kraft**, Josyf C. Mychaleckyj, **Alessandro Doria**. Diabetes Care Aug 2016

Baseline Prostate-Specific Antigen Levels in Midlife Predict Lethal Prostate Cancer. Preston MA, Batista JL, **Wilson KM**, Carlsson SV, **Gerke T**, Sjöberg DD, Dahl DM, **Sesso HD**, Feldman AS, Gann PH, Kibel AS, Vickers AJ, **Mucci LA**. J Clin Oncol. 2016 Jun 13

Ejaculation Frequency and Risk of Prostate Cancer: Updated Results with an Additional Decade of Follow-up. **Rider JR**, **Wilson KM**, Sinnott JA, Kelly RS, **Mucci LA**, **Giovannucci EL**. Eur Urol. 2016 Mar 28

Late-life Cognitive Activity and Dementia: A Systematic Review and Bias Analysis. **Sajeev G**, Weuve J, **Jackson JW**, **VanderWeele TJ**, Bennett DA, **Grodstein F**, **Blacker D**.

# Department Recognition

## Newly Awarded Grants

Dana-Farber Harvard Cancer Center (DFHCC) Nodal Award ([Dr. Shuji Ogino](#) & [Dr. Tyler VanderWeele](#)) “Transdisciplinary Approach to Colorectal Cancer Immunity, Molecular Pathology, and Clinical Outcome”. This Nodal Award mechanism aims to enhance interdisciplinary research by diverse disciplines. \$98K direct for 2 years from 6/1/16.

## Youth in Public Health Symposium | China

[Dr. Liming Liang](#), Associate Professor of Statistical Genetics, led the organization of the first Youth in Public Health Symposium in China, together with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Post-doc Association at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The symposium, which took place at Harvard Center Shanghai between August 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> was created to provide younger Chinese generations with exposure to a range of areas within the field of public health, skills to develop research questions, and resources and a network of colleagues within the field of public health. The 3-day symposium leveraged the existing Public Health 101 nano-course series at the School was very well received by a total of 71 high school students from top high schools across the country. According to a survey based on 66 questionnaires, more than 83% of the students would be more likely to pursue public health as a career or education after the symposium.



## REACH Certificate Recipient

Grants Manager, **Louis Venturelli** completed the



“Research Excellence in Administration Certification at Harvard”(REACH) program through Harvard’s Office of Sponsored Research. The program is designed as an interactive and engaging certificate that is specifically designed for Harvard

Research administrators and other personnel who engage in the assistance and management of sponsored funds.

## Leader in Transgender Health

[Dr. Sari Reisner](#), Assistant Professor of Epidemiology was profiled as a leader in transgender health by The Lancet.



“Trans people face social and economic marginalisation and exclusion across the world. A human rights-based approach is vital to improving the health of our communities.”

## Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria | PBS

[Dr. Bill Hanage](#), Associate Professor of Epidemiology, and faculty member in the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics addressed global concerns regarding antibiotic resistant bacteria on the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) with host Tavis Smiley.

Check out the interview on PBS here: <https://goo.gl/RnP-WG4>

## ACEP Outstanding Contribution in Research Award

[Carlos A. Camargo, M.D., Dr.P.H.](#), Professor of Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Professor of Emergency Medicine and Medicine at Harvard Medical School, was awarded by the American College of Emergency Physicians(ACEP) the Outstanding Contribution in Research Award for his leading research in the areas of respiratory/allergy diseases and of health policy issues in emergency care.



## International Society for Environmental Epidemiology

In September, [Dr. Donna Spiegelman](#) attended the 28th Annual International Society for Environment Epidemiology Conference in Rome, Italy, where she presented a highlighted poster on “Survival analysis with measurement error in a cumulative exposure variable: radon progeny in relation to lung cancer mortality.”, collaborated with [Polyna Khudyakov](#) and [Xiaomei Liao](#) of the Epidemiology Department, [Jonathan Samet](#) of the Keck School of Medicine, [Charles Wiggins](#) of the University of New Mexico, and [Angela Meisner](#) of the New Mexico Tumor Registry.

# Save The Date

## [The 164th Cutter Lecture On Preventive Medicine](#)



*Creating A Path To Understand Diet And Health*

[Walter C. Willett, MD, DrPH](#)

Chair, [Department of Nutrition](#)

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Friday, December 9, 2016 | 4:30-5:30pm

677 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115





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Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health  
Department of Epidemiology  
677 Huntington Ave, Kresge 9  
Boston, MA 02115  
[hsph.harvard.edu/epidemiology](http://hsph.harvard.edu/epidemiology)

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Eric DiGiovanni- [edigiova@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:edigiova@hsph.harvard.edu)

## Contact The Department of Epidemiology

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health  
Department of Epidemiology  
677 Huntington Ave, Kresge 901  
Boston, MA 02115  
[hsph.harvard.edu/epidemiology](http://hsph.harvard.edu/epidemiology)  
Tel: 617.432.1328

Editorial Board: Eric DiGiovanni & David Vaughn