

# Epicenter

Department of Epidemiology Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 2, April 2017



[GINGER | Global Initiative for Neuropsychiatric Genetics Education in Research](#) (L-R) Lori Chibnik, Assistant Professor, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Zukiswa Zingela of Walter Sisulu University in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, South Africa; Dr. Lukoye Atwoli, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Dean, Moi University School of Medicine, Eldoret, Kenya, Visiting Scientist, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health; Dr. Dickens Akena Psychiatrist and Lecturer, Department of Psychiatry, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda; Kristianna Post, Program Manager, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Bizu Gelaye, Research Scientist, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

# GINGER

## Global Initiative for Neuropsychiatric Genetics Education in Research

[Drs. Lori Chibnik](#) and [Bizu Gelaye](#) launched activities for a new research education program, known as the Global Initiative for Neuropsychiatric Genetics Education in Research (GINGER). GINGER aims to improve and achieve equity in mental health by expanding capacity to conduct large-scale psychiatric genetic epidemiology in low and middle income countries (LMICs). To achieve this goal, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT are collaborating with multiple African institutions to build the GINGER training program that will launch in July of 2017. The 2-year program will begin by enrolling 17 GINGER fellows from six different institutions in Africa, who will attend a series of neuropsychiatric epidemiology and genetics workshops, weekly virtual training and mentoring sessions, and on-site skills based training to be taught at each collaborating institution.

To kick-off the GINGER program, Dr. Chibnik and Dr. Gelaye, GINGER's Program Director and Associate Director, hosted a curriculum development workshop on February 2-3, 2017. Known as the Curriculum Jamboree, the workshop brought together over 30 local and international researchers, including Dean of the Harvard Chan School [Michelle A. Williams](#), Chair of the Department of Epidemiology [Dr. Albert Hofman](#), former Harvard University Provost and current Director of the Stanley Center at the Broad Institute, [Dr. Steve Hyman](#), as well as Principal Investigators from the GINGER collaborating sites in Africa.



## New Faces in Epi

### **Anne Stevenson**

Program Director, Epidemiology



[Anne Stevenson](#) was hired as the Program Director for the NeuroGAP - Psychosis study and joins us at the Harvard Chan School after serving as the Program Director of Massachusetts General Hospital's Division of Global Psychiatry. Stevenson has been working with [Dr. Karestan Koenen](#) as part of the NeuroGAP - Psychosis\* team in a limited capacity for over a year and comes with over 10 years of experience in research and programming in low and middle-income countries. Ms. Stevenson earned her master's degree in Health Policy, Planning, and Financing from the London School of Economics and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

### **Kristianna Post**

Program Manager, Epidemiology

Kristianna Post (Kristi) joined the Harvard Chan school as GINGER's Program Manager in December 2016. Kristi joins GINGER after spending seven years in the field of International Development, where she directly managed development economics field research projects in East Africa and Vietnam and supported projects in over 15 countries globally. Kristi has also led research capacity building initiatives internationally for non-profit organizations, educational institutions and multilateral agencies. Kristi holds an MSc in International Development and Behavioral Decision Science and received a Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowship for Kiswahili during her graduate studies.



### **Wairimu Mwaura**

Program Coordinator, Epidemiology

Wairimu Mwaura joined Harvard Chan as the GINGER Program Coordinator in March 2017. Wairimu joins GINGER after spending more than two years as an Administrative Coordinator for the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, where she worked with faculty and students alike to promote and sponsor annual programs and activities that are designed to promote diversity, inclusion and equity at Harvard University.

\* NeuroGAP-Psychosis aims to collect DNA and phenotypic information from 35,000 cases (participants with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) and controls over the next four years in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa.

# Celebration with the Stars

Congratulations to the following members of the Department of Epidemiology who were honored on February 28, 2017 for their years of dedicated service to the Department of Epidemiology, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and most importantly the field of Epidemiology.

## 5 Years

\*\*

[Bizu Gelaye](#)  
Brad Karalius  
[Michelle A. Williams](#)

## 10 Years

\*\*

Julie Karen Alperen  
[Kunjal Patel](#)  
[Katherine Tassiopoulos](#)  
[Eric J. Tchetgen Tchetgen](#)  
Julie Wei Wu

## 15 Years

\*\*

Randall Chaput  
[Francine Laden](#)  
[Marc G. Weisskopf](#)

## 20 Years

\*\*

[Edward L. Giovannucci](#)

## 25 Years

\*\*

[Paige L. Williams](#)

## 30 Years

\*\*

[David Christopher Christiani](#)

## 40 Years

\*\*

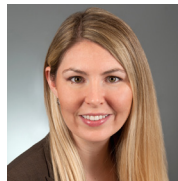
[Douglas William Dockery](#)



## Department News & Recognition

- [Dr. Shuji Ogino](#) has been selected as the recipient of the [American Society for Investigative Pathology \(ASIP\)](#) Outstanding Investigator Award, and will lecture at the 2018 Experimental Biology Meeting which will include several scientific societies.

- [Dr. Brittany Charlton](#) was recently awarded a five-year career development grant from the American Cancer Society (ACS) to examine sexual orientation-related cancer disparities.



- [Dr. William Hanage](#) lectured on Bacterial Population Genomics at the 14th Annual Symposium on Microbial Sciences, organized by the Microbial Sciences Initiative at Harvard. Dr. Hanage is an Associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the Harvard Chan School.

- The Boston Globe published an Op-Ed piece by [Dr. Caroline Buckee](#) titled, "[Sorry, Silicon Valley, but 'disruption' isn't a cure-all](#)" on January 22, 2017.

- [Dr. Karestan Koenen](#) hosted colleagues from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda on February 1, 2017 as part of the study launch for a joint project between Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. The study, Neuropsychiatric Genetics in African Populations – Psychosis (NeuroGAP - Psychosis), will collect DNA and phenotypic data from 35,000 participants over a four-year period.

- [JoAnn E. Manson, MD, DrPH](#), Chief of the Division of Preventive Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Professor of Medicine and the Michael and Lee Bell Professor of Women's Health, Harvard Medical School, and Professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, received the [The Massachusetts Medical Society's Women's Health Research Award](#) for 2017 for outstanding and pioneering contributions that have advanced women's health research. Dr. Manson was recognized for her exceptional contributions to the understanding of women's cardiovascular health and the role of estrogen, physical activity, vitamin D, and other factors.



- Rocky Stroud II** received the Harvard T.H. Chan's "Acknowledging Commitment and Excellence" Award. Those who nominated him said that, "Rocky is a walking encyclopedia of knowledge of how to get things done at the Harvard Chan School!"



- In March, [Dr. Donna Spiegelman](#) gave an invited talk at the Yale School of Public Health. Her presentation was titled, "Towards a unified methodology of study design and statistical analysis for causal inference in implementation science."

# Student and Postdoc Accomplishments

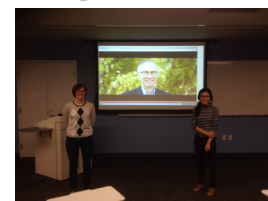
**Reiko Nishihara** was the recipient of the 2017 [American Society for Investigative Pathology \(ASIP\)](#) George K. Michalopoulos Junior Faculty Travel Award.



Doctoral candidate **Corey Peak** recently published “Comparing nonpharmaceutical interventions for containing emerging epidemics” in the Proceedings of the National Academies of Science (PNAS), with [Caroline Buckee](#) and [Lauren Childs](#) of the Epidemiology Department and Yonatan Grad of the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases. Having defended his dissertation “Optimizing Interventions to Control Emerging Infectious Diseases” on March 7, 2017, he accepted a fellowship with the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

**Katsiaryna Bykov**, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Epidemiology will be presenting at the SER conference in June 2017. Bykov’s abstract is entitled “Interaction between clopidogrel and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors: does order matter?”

**Weike Wang** and **Claire Pernar** were the Recipients of the 2016 Harvey V. Fineberg Fellowship. They presented on March 24, 2017. Claire Pernar’s talk was “Investigating the Role of Physical Activity in the Development of Prostate Cancer” and Weike Wang’s talk was “Hyperinsulinemia indices and cancer risk.”



**Pier Palamara**, a postdoctoral fellow in [Dr. Alkes Price’s](#) group accepted a tenure-track faculty position at the University of Oxford.

**Mary Kathryn (MK) Downer** and **Barbra Dickerman** presented their work at the Tenth Annual Prostate Cancer Program Retreat in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. MK presented her work on “Regular aspirin use and risk of lethal prostate cancer in the Physicians’ Health Study” and Barbra presented on “Body fat distribution and prostate cancer risk and mortality in the AGES-Reykjavik study.”



**Cindy Zhou** began working with the prostate cancer epidemiology team this March as a new postdoctoral fellow with Dr. Lorelei Mucci. She previously worked as a postdoctoral fellow with the Metabolic Epidemiology Branch at the National Cancer Institute. Her research focuses on the epidemiology of prostate cancer risk and progression, with an emphasis on endogenous hormones, early life exposures, inflammation and somatic genome variations.

[Dr. Polyna Khudyakov](#), from the Spiegelman group, attended the ENAR Spring meeting to present on “Survival analysis with measurement error in a cumulative exposure variable: radon progeny in relation to lung cancer mortality”, joint work with Drs. Donna Spiegelman and Xiaomei Liao of the Epidemiology Department, Jonathan Samet of the USC Keck School of Medicine, Charles Wiggins of the University of New Mexico, and Angela Meisner of New Mexico Tumor Registry.

## In Other Epi News...



[Archana Basu](#), Research associate for Dr. Karestan Koenen’s Research Group welcomed a baby boy to the world on December 12, 2016!



**Colby Miller**, Program Coordinator, recently celebrated his engagement with Ian Bomberowitz.



**Suzy Roberts**, Program Coordinator, recently celebrated her engagement with Matt Levin.

# Upcoming Events & Updates

## The 165th Cutter Lecture on Preventive Medicine

Sir. David Cox  
Honorary Fellow, Nuffield College, Oxford, UK  
Statistical Science: A Grammar For Research  
Wednesday May 3, 2017 4:00pm  
Interactive Live Stream in Snyder Auditorium (Kresge G1)



## 15th Annual Jonathan Freeman Symposium on Infectious Disease Epidemiology

May 1, 2017  
HSPH Kresge Building, 677 Huntington Ave, Boston  
\*\*\*

1:30 – 4:30 pm Talks - Kresge G3  
4:45 – 6:30 pm Poster Presentations & Reception - HSPH FXB Atrium  
\*\*\*

Please join us for an afternoon of talks and poster presentations by faculty, research fellows, students, and postdocs participating in the HSPH Interdisciplinary Concentration in Infectious Disease Epidemiology. This event is open to the public. For more information, or if you would like to present a talk or a poster at the event, contact Alan Berkeley at [aberkele@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:aberkele@hsph.harvard.edu) or Claire Berman at [cberman@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:cberman@hsph.harvard.edu)



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## Department of Epidemiology Seminars and Special Events

### Spring 2017

April	19		<b>Zach Shahn, PhD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Research Fellow</i> <i>Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502
	26		<b>Reisa A. Sperling, MD, MMSc</b> <i>Director, Center for Alzheimer's Research and Treatment &amp; Co-Director, Neuroimaging Core, Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center &amp; Professor of Neurology, Harvard Medical School</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502
May	3	165 <sup>th</sup> Cutter Lecture on Preventive Medicine	<b>Sir David Cox, FRS, FBA, PhD</b> <i>Honorary Fellow, Nuffield College</i> <i>Department of Statistics, University of Oxford</i>	4:00-5:00	Snyder Auditorium (Kresge G1)
	10		<b>Sandro Galea, MD, MPH, DrPh</b> <i>Robert A. Knox Professor</i> <i>Dean, Boston University School of Public Health</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502

## MLSC Award | Biobank for Microbiome Research in Massachusetts (BIOM-Mass)

Recently, [Drs. Shelley Tworoger](#), [Eric Rimm](#), [Wendy Garrett](#), and [Curtis Huttenhower](#) with other faculty from the Harvard Chan School, received a Capital Program award from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center to build the Biobank for Microbiome Research in Massachusetts (BIOM-Mass). BIOM-Mass will: (a) create the world's largest prospective collection of microbiome specimens from 25,000 individuals in the Nurses' Health Study II; (b) leverage cutting edge laboratory automation to collect and store biospecimens for this and many future studies; and c) deploy a novel analysis and bioinformatics data portal to support microbiome research and development. The primary goal is to build an integrated microbiome research platform allowing collection, use, and analysis of microbiome-targeted biospecimens accessible to all investigators at the Harvard Chan School that complements existing microbiome resources at the School. Please contact Dr. Rimm ([erimm@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:erimm@hsph.harvard.edu)) if you are interested in learning more about the resource.



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