



A New Academic Year Begins...

The Department of Epidemiology would like to extend a warm welcome to all new and returning department members as we begin a new year! With fall classes and activities in full swing, we hope that you are all taking the time to connect with the Department of Epidemiology community to maximize the wonderful possibilities available during this new academic session. Best of luck for a productive new semester filled with many valuable learning opportunities.

An innovative collaboration with King Abdulaziz University

Since 2008, Professor **James Ware** in the Biostatistics Department has led a collaboration with **King Abdulaziz University (KAU)** in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to foster learning and research opportunities for Saudi public health and medical professionals. The current focus of that effort is a joint MPH in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, which will see its first cohort graduate in June 2015. Since the program began last fall, 13 HSPH faculty and students partnered with KAU faculty to run 12 courses. The courses utilized a flipped classroom and, primarily, a distance learning approach. From our own department, **Fran Cook**, **Julie Buring**, **Megan Murray**, **Howard Sesso**, Nadia Abuelezzam, Ashkan Afshin, and I developed and taught courses in epidemiologic and research methods as well as infectious and chronic disease epidemiology.

As a teaching fellow, my involvement in this program allowed me to work closely with HSPH and KAU faculty to create course content, teach and mentor KAU students, and gain valuable experience in a different pedagogical model, the use of technology in the classroom, and teaching internationally. This collaboration further involved training the KAU faculty to assume increasing responsibility for the program, tackling big picture questions about what it is that makes a program succeed. This past spring, my experience was further enriched by two opportunities to travel to KAU with Julie Buring. Each of those two weeks essentially involved an epidemiology boot camp, tying together a year's worth of curriculum as the KAU students worked to finalize their thesis proposals and presentations. During our time on the ground, we witnessed exponential growth in the students' understanding and confidence. On a personal level, we were given unique access to a largely closed society and were overwhelmed by the hospitality of the Saudi students and faculty who arranged for a daily feast of regional food and welcomed us into their lives. While all of this was not without its challenges (travel tip: if offered lamb intestine, take small bites), I'm grateful to the school and our department for supporting initiatives like the joint MPH at King Abdulaziz University and look forward to welcoming the second cohort of KAU MPH students during this coming academic year.



Jen Stuart and Dr. Julie Buring during a visit to KAU in spring



Jen Stuart & Dr. Julie Buring with KAU students and faculty

Department News & Recognition

Second Annual Celebration of Junior Investigators in Cancer Research

- Sponsored by the Dana Farber and Harvard Cancer Center, the celebration will take place in the Yawkey Conference Center 306 (DFCI) on September 24 from 1-6pm. The [event](#) is a half-day symposium to highlight the talent of junior investigators at the [Dana Farber/Harvard Cancer Center](#) (DF/HCC) who are producing important research in several areas of population science including epidemiology, biostatistics, outcomes, diversity and survivorship. A primary aim of this symposium is to build opportunities for collaboration for junior investigators and provide a forum for new interactions and projects. The [agenda](#) includes plenary speaker (Tom Sellers, PhD), short oral presentations, poster session and reception.

Hong Kong University's first MOOC

- Hong Kong University's first [MOOC](#) begins in September. Marc Lipsitch, Center Director and Professor of Epidemiology at HSPH, will be one of several faculty who will be lecturing as part of [Hong Kong University's](#) first open access course. The University of Hong Kong (HKU) is both internationally engaged and at the forefront of innovations in teaching and learning. The 10 week course, titled "Epidemics" is free and will begin in September.

HSPH Career Incubator Fund Winner

- Congratulations to [Caroline Buckee](#) who was awarded the Career Incubator Fund for the funding period July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015. This fund supports scientific career development of tenure ladder assistant and associate professors so they may develop innovative and novel research ideas.

PGSG Leadership Updates

- After founding the Program in Molecular and Genetic Epidemiology (now the Program in Genetic Epidemiology and Statistical Genetics or [PGSG](#)) and overseeing its rapid growth (it has more than doubled in number of faculty, staff and trainees over the last 10 years) Professor [David Hunter](#) has stepped down as PGSG director to focus on his duties as Dean for Academic Affairs. Professor [Peter Kraft](#) is the new PGSG Director. Professor Kraft was deputy director of the PGSG from 2010 to 2014

Global Epidemiology

- Professor [Mathew Mimiaga](#) was awarded an [NIMH](#) R01 to continue his HIV prevention work in India and also an [NIMH](#) R34 to develop and pilot test a [PrEP](#) (truvada for prevention) demonstration trial and adherence intervention for transgender women in Lima, Peru.

New Role for Jennifer Polinski

- Congratulations to [Jennifer Polinski](#)! She recently took a position to lead her own research group as the Director of Foundational Evaluation at [CVS Caremark](#).



Thinfluence

- Professor [Walter Willett](#) has a new publication soon to be released to the general public called [Thinfluence](#). The book discusses ground-breaking research pointing to external factors that contribute to weight issues such as social, environmental, and policy-based issues. It is written in collaboration with [Malissa Wood](#) and [Dan Chids](#).

Charles J. Epstein Research Award

- Postdoctoral Fellow [Po-Ru Loh](#) has received a Charles J. Epstein Research Semifinalist Award for his presentation, "*Efficient Bayesian mixed model analysis increases association power in large cohorts*," which was selected for a platform talk at the [2014 American Society of Human Genetics Annual Meeting](#) this October in San Diego. Several other PGSG members will also be presenting their work at this Fall's ASHG meeting; the full list can be found on the [PGSG website](#).

Cindy Wu's New Publications

- Former PGSG postdoctoral fellow Chen (Cindy) Wu is the first author on a Nature Medicine paper studying pancreatic cancer, "Elevated circulating branched chain amino acids are an early event in pancreatic adenocarcinoma development" (2014 in press). Dr. Wu is also first author of large new meta-analysis of genome-wide association studies of esophageal cancer in Chinese populations: Wu et al. "[Joint analysis of three genome-wide association studies of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma in Chinese populations](#)," Nature Genetics, published online 17 August 2014. Dr. Wu started both of these projects while she was a postdoc at HSPH.



Department members enjoying the reception at the most recent [Cutter Lecture](#)

Save the date!

Epi Department Fall Seminar Series

Get involved and become involved with many of the exciting events coming up in the Department of Epidemiology!



September	24	Special Event	Department of Epidemiology Faculty Retreat	8:00-1:30PM	Joseph B. Martin Conference Center
October	1		<i>Vulvodynia: Prevalent, Debilitating, Poorly Understood: Exploring Biopsychosocial Hypotheses</i> Bernard L. Harlow, Ph.D. <i>Mayo Professor and Division Head, Epidemiology & Community Health Associate Director, CTSI Populations and Community Engagement Core University of Minnesota School of Public Health</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502
	20	Special Seminar	<i>Challenges Preventing Postpartum Depression in Mexican Pregnant Women</i> M. Asunción Lara, Ph.D. <i>National Institute of Psychiatry, Mexico</i>	12:30-1:30	FXB G13
November	5		<i>Transforming Epidemiology for 21st Century Medicine and Public Health</i> Muin J. Khoury, MD, PhD <i>Director, Office of Public Health Genomics Centers for Disease Control</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502
	10		<i>Hiding in Plain View: the Need for a Randomized Trial of Aspirin for Breast Cancer Survival</i> Michelle D. Holmes, MD, DrPH <i>Assoc. Prof. of Medicine & Epidemiology Harvard Medical School & Harvard School of Public Health</i>	12:30-1:30	FXB G12
	13	Co-Sponsored with the MPH Program	<i>Has Epidemiology Become Infatuated With Theory?</i> Alfredo Morabia, PhD, MPH <i>Professor of Epidemiology The Barry Commoner Center for the Biology of Natural Systems City University of New York & Department of Epidemiology Mailman School of Public Health Columbia University</i>	12:30-1:30	FXB G12
December	3	Special Event	<i>The Growing Rift Between Epidemiologists and Their Data</i> 160th Cutter Lecture on Preventive Medicine Kenneth J. Rothman, DrPH <i>Distinguished Fellow, Research Triangle Institute Professor of Epidemiology, Boston University</i>	4:00-5:00	Kresge G1 (Snyder Auditorium)

Additional Upcoming Events:

- ◆ **Student Information Session: Monday, September 15th in FXB G13-** Come to this lunchtime info session at **12:30pm** about department requirements and course planning for all students in addition to prospective and final programs for doctoral students.
- ◆ The **HSPH Reel Epi** Student Organization is hosting a movie screening and discussion of the film, *Unnatural Causes*, with guest speaker, **Dr. Nancy Krieger** on **Tuesday, September 16th at 5:45pm** in the **Joseph B Martin lounge** in Vanderbilt Hall. Food and drinks will be provided. This is a great opportunity to meet and hang out with friends and to discuss integrative topics in public health with peers. Please RSVP to ncd121@mail.harvard.edu if you plan to attend.



Interested in learning about research and/or job opportunities? Check out the department's "**Opportunities**" webpage!