

Epicenter

Department of Epidemiology Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 5, September 2015



Summer Program in Epidemiology 2015



HARVARD
T.H. CHAN

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Summer Edition

Welcome Back!

The Department of Epidemiology is excited to welcome (27)-80 Credit Masters students, (13)-42.5 Credit Masters students, and (8) –Doctor of Science students to the department and school. This past summer we also invited the fifth cohort of Summer Program in Epidemiology students who traveled from all across the country for an intensive 4 week program that included Intro to Biostatistics/Epidemiology Courses, Faculty Lectures, GRE Prep Courses, and a culminating research project lead by department Faculty [Lorelei Mucci](#), [Stacey Missmer](#), [Flaminia Catteruccia](#), Research Fellow [Lauren Childs](#), and Harvard Catalyst Affiliates [Helen Jenkins](#) and [Courtney Yuen](#).

The **EPI Academic Team** invites you to share your anonymous [feedback/comments/concerns](#)! Can't think of anything now? Don't worry, you can find the link in our email signatures!

-Ellen Furxhi and Eric DiGiovanni– Epi Academic Team

New Faces in Epi



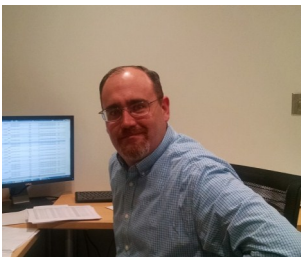
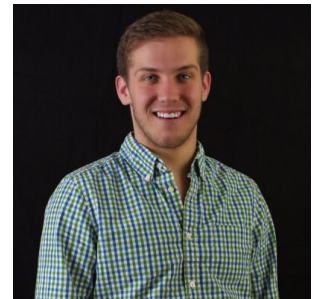
Dr. Timothy Rebbeck
Professor of Epidemiology

Dr. Rebbeck is Professor of Epidemiology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He leads molecular epidemiology studies of cancer etiology, outcomes, health disparities, and global health. His work has led to an understanding of the genetic and environmental causes of breast, prostate, skin, endometrial and ovarian cancers. He currently leads international cancer consortia that study risk and outcomes of 1) cancer in BRCA1/BRCA2 mutation carriers, and 2) prostate cancer in men of African descent in North America, the Caribbean, and Africa.

Rocky Stroud II
Program Coordinator, Epidemiology

Rocky comes to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health with a varied background in education, clinical recruitment and advertising. In his last position, Rocky was working as a Senior Clinical Recruiter within the health insurance field.

He was born and raised in Grand Rapids, MI and graduated from the University of Notre Dame. He volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters and can be found at many a trivia nights throughout the Boston area. He moved to Boston a little over a year ago, and currently resides in Brighton.



Laurence Connelly
Senior Portfolio Manager

Laurence has over 17 years of experience at Harvard University. Before joining Epidemiology, Laurence was a Portfolio Manager at Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) within FAS. At MCB, Laurence was responsible for the day to day operation of 8 PI labs and all their post award needs. Laurence has twice received an Impact Award from Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Laurence currently lives in Cambridge with his wife and 2 daughters.

Louis Venturelli
Jr. Grants Manager

Louis Venturelli is new to Harvard University, working previously for a company specializing in non-profit client development and donor outreach. He was responsible for payroll administration, improving processes and working with a strong team to get things done. He also wrote new manuals, trained managers on systems and answered employee questions. He enjoys problem-solving and critically engaging with systems to make them work better, as well as hiking, cooking, and travel.

A life-long native of Boston, Louis earned his Bachelor's Degree from Boston University.



Alumni Spotlight



Suyog Kamatkar, SM Epi, MD

Neonatal Pulmonary Biology Fellow
Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Suyog.kamatkar@cchmc.org

I did a Masters in Epidemiology with a special focus on Biostatistics and clinical trial design. After my graduation, I worked as a research fellow at the Betsy Lehman Quality Improvement Initiative at Massachusetts Board of Medicine. From there I went to Indiana University to take residency training in Pediatrics. At IU, I was part of the Morris Green Pediatric Scientist Development Program as a resident research scholar. After completing residency, I have joined Cincinnati Children's for further training in a clinical fellowship in Neonatology and Pulmonary Biology.

Harvard and the T.H. Chan School of Public Health gave me holistic training and real world education. During the Masters in Epidemiology, I strengthened my research skills while working in highly diverse teams. One truly remarkable thing about the Harvard experience is how much I learned from my peers and classmates and how even complex problems become solvable when you have brilliant minds from different parts of the world working on the solution. In India, we believe that the value of education lies not just in what is learned in books and lecture halls but by real-world experiences designed to bring that knowledge to life. For one project, I worked with an Argentinean and two Pakistani physicians on a meta-analysis that we published. For another course, I was teamed with Nigerian, Tanzanian and American medical students on a research project under the guidance of an Italian professor. I learned a lot about the benefits of working with individuals from diverse cultures and different perspectives.

While working in NICU I take care of extremely premature, low birth weight and critically ill newborn babies. In addition to direct

patient care, as a senior clinical fellow at Cincinnati Children's, I play an important role in my team's academic progress. Besides supervising patient care, I lead discussions on new literature to answer clinical questions we face. As a team leader, I derive from and use lessons in leadership and communication, learned at Harvard. The generation of knowledge gains meaning in the context of service, and advocacy for patient care and resident trainee welfare is one of my fervent goals. I take special pride in representing our residency and fellowship programs at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). My affiliation with various committees at the AAP has helped me to develop a holistic understanding of system-level challenges of academia and health policy.

My medical interests are not limited to the clinical arena. There are other things in hospitals and academia for which I am passionate about. Quality improvement in healthcare delivery and clinical research stand out as the two main leads in my non-clinical life. Having experienced first hand the inequalities of global healthcare systems while working in Mumbai's slums. I want to work toward improving the health outcomes and quality of life of impoverished communities. My ultimate dream is to be a Clinical Researcher doing longitudinal studies in mother-infant cohorts while maintaining a clinical practice. In my work as a pediatrician and through my studies at Harvard, I came to recognize that the global situation in maternal and child health could be vastly improved by informed and efficient resource allocation for these efforts.

Student Spotlight

Reproductive, Perinatal and Pediatric Epidemiology



Leslie Farland
SD Candidate

Leslie Farland is a doctoral candidate in RPP Epidemiology. In 2012, Leslie graduated with an MSc in Epidemiology from our Department. She is interested in the intersection between reproductive health and cancer risk, and her current research is focused on infertility, fertility treatment, endometriosis, breast cancer, and cardiovascular disease. She has received support from the NICHD training grant in RPP epidemiology and was a Harvey V. Fineberg Cancer Prevention Fellow. She is currently supported by the Harvard Cancer Prevention Fellowship. For 2015-

2016, Leslie is the recipient of the P.E.O. Scholar Award, a national merit-based academic scholarship for women pursuing doctoral degrees.

Under the guidance of Dr. Stacey Missmer, Leslie's dissertation investigates the relationship between endometriosis -- a chronic gynecologic disorder affecting approximately ten percent of women -- and breast cancer. Research from Dr. Missmer's group has shown that women with endometriosis may be at increased risk of cancers and other chronic diseases. While previous studies have reported modest increased risk between endometriosis and breast cancer, they lacked information on potential confounding/mediating factors and did not investigate heterogeneity across breast cancer tumors. Leslie's ongoing analyses will address these limitations. Leslie recently gave an oral presentation on her first dissertation aim, "A Prospective Study of Endometriosis and Risk of Breast Cancer" at the Society for Epidemiologic Research's annual conference in Denver, Colorado, where she received a Student Travel Award.

In addition, Leslie has recently published work on fertility treatment utilization patterns and safety within the Nurses' Health Study II. She found that women who had utilized fertility treatment were not at increased risk of hypertension over 20 years of follow-up. In the future, she hopes to quantify the relationship between fertility treatment, infertility, and breast health.



Sami Newlan
SD Candidate

Sami is a 2nd year Epidemiology Doctoral student in the Reproductive, Perinatal, and Pediatric program whose main interests are determinants of unintended pregnancy, as well as health and social impacts of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC). She has been involved in four diverse projects this summer. Sami collected baseline birth control and pregnancy intention data from women

in a family practice clinic in Worcester, MA, as part of a non-profit intervention aimed at increasing patient and provider uptake and acceptance of LARCs. She also participated in an extensive systematic review of youth-friendly HIV services to inform WHO guidelines on adolescent HIV care, and she is currently managing and analyzing data on an international cohort of flight attendants. Her flight attendant work is focused on the health impacts of on-the-job sexual harassment, verbal harassment, and sexual assaults; she plans to also look at flight attendant specific risk factors for reproductive cancers. Sami also has an ongoing data analyst position in the Nutrition department, where she manages and analyzes longitudinal data from an intervention to examine the effect of students' use of exercise bicycles in a therapeutic day school for children with Autism spectrum disorders and behavioral special needs. Apart from searching for common themes underlying all this diverse work, Sami plans to continue pursuing her research in unintended pregnancy and LARCs by applying the rigorous causal inference methods she learned in her first year in the program, using either the non-profit data she collected this summer or, optimistically, her own study that she hopes to design during the course of her program.



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SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Department of Epidemiology

Department of Epidemiology Seminars and Special Events

Fall 2015

September	2		Charles Wiggins, PhD <i>Director & Principal Investigator, New Mexico Tumor Registry</i> <i>Professor, Division of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, & Preventive Medicine</i> <i>Department of Internal Medicine</i> <i>UNM School of Medicine</i> <i>President, North American Association of Central Cancer Registries</i>	12:30-1:30	FXB G13
	16		Susan Redline, MD, MPH <i>Peter C. Farrell Professor of Sleep Medicine</i> <i>Harvard Medical School</i> <i>Director, Programs in Sleep and Cardiovascular Medicine and Sleep Medicine Epidemiology</i> <i>Brigham and Women's Hospital</i> <i>Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center</i>	12:30-1:30	FXB G13
	30		Alessandro Doria, MD, PhD <i>Investigator, Joslin Diabetes Center</i> <i>Associate Professor of Medicine</i> <i>Harvard Medical School</i> <i>Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology</i> <i>Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502
October	7		Daniel Cramer, MD, ScD <i>Professor in the Department of Epidemiology</i> <i>Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health</i> <i>Professor, Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Biology, Harvard Medical School</i> <i>Professor, Gynecology and Reproductive Science, Brigham and Women's Hospital</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502
	15		Gary King, PhD <i>Albert J. Weatherhead III University Professor</i> <i>Director, Institute for Quantitative Social Science</i> <i>Harvard University</i>	12:30-1:30	FXB G13
	21		Caroline Buckee, D.Phil, M.Res, B.Sc. <i>Assistant Professor of Epidemiology</i> <i>Department of Epidemiology</i> <i>Associate Director, Ctr for Communicable Disease Dynamics</i> <i>Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502
	28		Jaimie Gradus, DSc, MPH <i>Epidemiologist, Women's Health Sciences Division of the National Center for PTSD, VA Boston</i> <i>Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Epidemiology</i> <i>Boston University</i>	12:30-1:30	Kresge 502
December	2	Cutter Symposium	Cutter Lecture: Dimitrios Trichopoulos Memorial Symposium <i>Joseph B. Martin Conference Center</i> <i>77 Avenue Louis Pasteur, Boston, MA 02115</i>	9:00-4:00	Joseph B. Martin Conference Center, HMS

Tuesday 9/15/15 12:30pm – 1:30pm Kresge G1: **EPI Degree Planning Information Session** (SM1, SM2 and SD) hosted by EPI Academic Team

Monday 10/5/15 2:00pm – 3:00pm Kresge 200: **Oral Exam Information Session** with Dr. Rimm & EPI Academic Team

Grants Management Forum– 6 hour long session on applying to grants, presented by Epi Grants Team & Faculty Guests (Kresge 907)

10/29 4pm– Overview

11/17 4pm– Mock Application

12/08 4pm– Details/Justifications

2/4 4pm–Open Forum/Mock Application HW Assigned

3/3 4pm–Critique of Application

3/24 4pm–Open Forum/Final Questions

Brought to you by the Grants Team & the Student Advisory Committee(SAC) edigiova@hsph.harvard.edu w/ questions

Department Recognition

- [Dr. Donna Spiegelman](#) and colleagues' work strengthens the causal evidence for the health effects of chronic exposure to air pollution by eliminating uncertainty due to exposure measurement error. Read the full release [here](#).
- [Dr. Karestan Koenen](#) received the Outstanding Contributions to the Science of Trauma Psychology award from the American Psychological Association
- [Dr. Shuji Ogino's](#) application for the 7-year NCI R35 Outstanding Investigator Award entitled "Accelerating Transdisciplinary Epidemiology of Colorectal Cancer" which received the best Impact Score of 10 has been selected for funding.
- "Explanation in Causal Inference: Methods for mediation and Interaction", written by [Dr. Tyler VanderWeele](#), won the 2015 Causality in Statistics Education Award from the American Statistical Association
- [Dr. Peter Kraft](#) is co-author on a recently published paper in *Nature*, "Directional dominance on stature and cognition in diverse human populations." The study examined runs of homozygosity of 16 health-related quantitative traits in 354,224 individuals from 102 cohorts, and found statistically significant associations between summed runs of homozygosity and four complex traits: height, forced expiratory lung volume in one second, general cognitive ability and educational attainment.
- Research Scientist [Sarah Lindstrom](#), Epi Faculty Members [Dr. Peter Kraft](#) and [Dr. Alkes Price](#), and Research Associate [Jen Sinnott](#), among others received a U01 funded by NCI. The title of the grant is "Quantifying and Characterizing the Shared Genetic Contribution to Common Cancers" (PI: Lindstrom).
- [Dr. Jennifer Rider](#) has accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Epidemiology at Boston University, and will be starting there in October. Congratulations and best of luck Dr. Rider!

Promotion and Appointments

- [Liming Liang](#)- Promoted to Associated Professor, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School
- [Victoria de Menil](#)- Appointed as Research Associate with Karestan Koenen, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School
- [Xin Zhou](#)- Appointed as Research Fellow with Donna Spiegelman, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School
- [Daniel Nevo](#)- Appointed as Research Fellow with Donna Spiegelman, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School
- [Zach Shahn](#)- Appointed as Research Fellow with Miguel Hernan, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School
- [Kate Langwig](#)- Appointed as Research Fellow with Marc Lipsitch, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School
- [Peter James](#)- Promoted to Research Associate with Francine Laden, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School
- [Ericka Ebot](#)- Promoted to Research Associate with Lorelei Mucci, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School

Postdoctoral Association

Nanocourses:

Environmental Health: Tuesday October 27th & Tuesday November 3rd

R: Thursday November 5th & Thursday November 12th

Peer Grant Network:

The Postdoctoral Association is excited to announce the school wide **Peer Grant Network (PGN)**, a resource for postdocs, research associates, and students seeking guidance on fellowship and grant applications.

Questions regarding PDA should be directed to pda@hsph.harvard.edu

Summer Internships in Epi



"Two days after I had completed my first year of graduate school, I was on a plane headed for Mexico. There I spent three exceptional weeks working for Mexico's National Institute of Public Health and deepening my love for authentic Mexican cuisine.

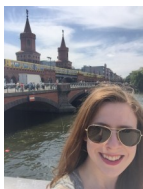
I joined the INSP team working on the EsMaestras study (also known as the Mexican Teachers' Cohort), which has enrolled over 100,000 female teachers from across the country since 2006. The aim of this study is to evaluate life styles and environmental risk factors related to chronic diseases. I am conducting research on how adverse childhood experiences in this population, such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction, impact risk of obesity, hypertension, and

diabetes in adulthood. In addition to carrying out this analysis, I had the opportunity to meet and work with over 200 teachers from the study during one of the data collection phases. Given the chance to apply epidemiologic and statistical methods to real data as well as experience the excitement of on-the-ground fieldwork in Mexico was invaluable. Not only do I have a better understanding of the complexities of collecting data, but also a deeper appreciation of the story behind the numbers. While my travels to Mexico have undoubtedly contributed to my educational and professional growth, it is the personal connections I made with researchers at INSP, teachers from the study, and strangers who became friends that I will never forget.

The Bicentennial and Von Clemm travel fellowships made my trip to this amazing city possible, and I am incredibly grateful for the Harvard Chan School's generous commitment to international research. I enjoyed the experience so much that I decided to return again in August to continue working on my project (and eat more tacos!). -Erin Comerford



[Erin Comerford](#)



[Kathryn Rough](#)

Kathryn Rough spent the summer in Berlin, Germany working as an intern with Bayer's Global Epidemiology team. Her primary focus was developing a model to estimate country-level incidence of mesothelioma based on

"After attending the Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) Annual Scientific Day in London, I did some research on Epicentre, MSF's research arm. My advisor helped to set me up with an internship under Rebecca Grais, the director of epidemiology at Epicentre. I set off to Paris for two months, and within a few weeks I had got involved with three projects that were very different in scope and in the skill sets required. I worked on simulation of vaccine trials in the context of an outbreak of an emerging disease such as Ebola. In this case, it is hard to design trials due to a lack of previous studies, as well as problems that come with working in epidemics such as uncertain flow of resources. By simulating trials based on parameters we know, it is possible to



[Matt Hitchings](#)

information on use of asbestos, healthcare access, economic indicators, and demographics. The group hopes the results will be helpful for treatment planning and resource allocation in countries where reliable incidence data is not otherwise available.

gain information that can help determine the required sample size, among other things. The other two projects were more standard epidemiological fare, but interesting nonetheless. I worked as a statistician on a randomized control trial of antivenom in Central African Republic, and used SAS to analyze some data on diet and mortality from an HIV study in Tanzania. I have continuing projects and potential publications out of the internship, and I met some very interesting people. Finally, I ate lots of cheese, in true Parisian style, and it was delicious."

-Matt Hitchings



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(Ideas for submission or comments are always welcomed)

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