



HARVARD
T.H. CHAN
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Research Scientist Association



NEWSLETTER
FALL 2023

Message from the RSAC Chair

We hope everyone is enjoying the fall season and will be able to take some well-deserved time off for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday!

The RSAC has been busy throughout the summer and fall organizing events for the Research Scientists and working on efforts to support our Research Scientists. On November 3, we hosted our school-wide Fall Research Scientist Seminar and our Research Scientist Fall Social. The seminar was very well attended and featured presentations from two of our 2023 Research Scientist Award recipients, Dr. Minttu Rönn from the Department of Global Health and Population, presenting her work titled “Influence of epidemiological drivers on the impact of partner notification programs: analysis of gonorrhea transmission dynamics.”, and Dr. Douaa Mugahid, from the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases, presenting her work titled “Multi-OMICs for Systems Immunology: Opportunities and challenges for the infectious diseases community.”

We are also continuing to work on issues raised by Research Scientists in the 2022 Research Scientist survey we sent out last December. As part of those efforts, we have been working with the Office of Research Strategy and Development (ORS) to develop more resources for Research Scientists looking to find funding for their research. We would like to thank ORS for creating a webpage of funding resources for Research Scientists, and also hosting a workshop on strategies for finding funding this September. The details for both are below. We are also continuing to work with Faculty Affairs to address the other key findings of the Research Scientist Survey, and are looking forward to making more progress in these areas this year!

Sincerely,
Karen Inouye, Chair Harvard TH Chan RSAC

2023-24 Research Scientist Association Council Members

Karen Inouye – Chair, Molecular Metabolism

Shafika Abrahams-Gessel – Center for Health Decision Science

Vincenzo Bollettino – Global Health and Population (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative)

Danielle Braun - Biostatistics

Terence Cheng – Global Health and Population

Mario Flores - Nutrition

Abhinav Kaushik -Environmental Health

Megan Marx Delaney – Health Policy and Management

Susan Peters – Social and Behavioral Sciences

Emma Preston – Environmental Health

Minttu Rönn – Global Health and Population

Linda Vesel – Health Policy and Management

Philip Kret (Administration) – Office of Faculty Affairs

Upcoming events:

Sign up to be a mentor

The Mentorship program with post-docs is a great way to contribute to the Harvard academic community and to expand your network. Research Scientists provide mentorship for interested Postdocs and Research Associates starting at the end of Nov 2023 and continuing throughout the academic year. Sign-ups are available soon, stay tuned!

Resources

How to fund your research: ORSD

In case you missed it, the Office of Research Strategy and Development (ORSD) has been working hard to share funding opportunities with Research Scientists. Check out these resources:

- [Web page](#) for funding resources for Research Scientists
- The workshop for Research Scientists hosted by ORSD in September entitled *Strategies for Finding Funding and Building Your Research Portfolio* was recorded. [Click here to watch the recording](#).

ORSD is also inviting Research Scientists to their “Specific Aims Workshop” offered by Donald Halstead, Lecturer on Epidemiology and Director of Writing Programs. Held in person on December 14, 10am-1pm, Kresge 110.

This workshop will analyze the arguments and narrative pathways embedded in the one page Specific Aims section, the grant proposal component that has the greatest impact on reviewers and other study section members. We will then apply these principles and constructively peer review the draft Aims that have been submitted.

- Register [here](#) by Thursday December 7 at 12:00pm.

Grant writing consultation service available

Harvard Catalyst offers individualized feedback for Harvard-affiliated staff planning to apply for an NIH K award. See [this link](#) for more details.



Research Scientist Appointments and Promotions

New Appointments

Kai Wang, Research Scientist, Epidemiology, 12/1/2023

Rachel Moyal-Smith, Research Scientist, Health Policy and Management/Ariadne Labs, 11/1/2023

Kimberley Hook, Research Scientist, Epidemiology, 10/1/2023

Samantha Palace, Research Scientist, Immunology and Infectious Diseases, 9/1/2023

Joyce Edmonds, Senior Research Scientist, Health Policy and Management, 8/1/2023

Vanitha Sampath, Research Scientist, Environmental Health, 7/1/2023

Richard Cowden, Research Scientist, Epidemiology, 7/1/2023

Mary Johnson, Principal Research Scientist, Environmental Health, 7/1/2023

Xiaoying Zhou, Senior Research Scientist, Environmental Health, 7/1/2023

Darina Bassil, Research Scientist, Center for Population and Development Studies, 6/1/2023

Yang Hu, Research Scientist, Nutrition, 5/1/2023

Promotions

Roger Logan, Senior Research Scientist, Epidemiology, 7/1/2023

Meeta Mistry, Senior Research Scientist, Biostatistics, 7/1/2023

Rebekka Lee, Lecturer, Social and Behavioral Sciences, 7/1/23

CONGRATS TO ALL!

Research Scientist Updates

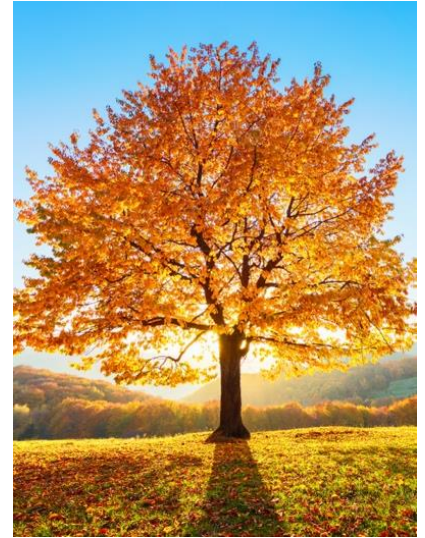
Awards

CONGRATS to the Research Scientist Association Award winners! The Research Scientist Association Awards are designed to recognize accomplishments and provide financial support to Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Research Scientists to facilitate their research or disseminate findings.

- **Emma Preston**: first place in the non-travel category
- **Douaa Mugahid**: second place in the non-travel category
- **Minttu Rönn**: first place in the travel category
- **Susan Peters**: second place in the travel category

Susan Peters (Research Scientist, Social and Behavioral Sciences) was successfully awarded an R21 from CDC/NIOSH entitled *WTC-Work Study: World Trade Center Non-Traditional Responders' Mental Health and Employment Study*.

This two year exploratory grant is to identify how different employment profiles and working conditions, and union and employer policies, programs, and practices affected World Trade Center non-traditional responders' (such as construction, electrical, telecommunications and transportation and materials workers) mental health, well-being, and health behaviors since the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center terrorist attacks.



Publications

Vincenzo Bollettino (Senior Research Scientist, Global Health and Population) published a manuscript entitled "Challenges in humanitarian response implementation: a large-scale review of aid worker perspectives" in *Disasters*. This work examines the perspectives of 4,679 aid workers applying to the National NGO Program on Humanitarian Leadership (NNPHL) on what they see as the major challenges to implementing emergency response programming. <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12607>

Linda Vesel (Senior Research Scientist, Health Policy and Management) published 5 co-authored, peer-reviewed publications on the results of the Low Birthweight Infant Feeding Exploration (LiFE) study conducted in India, Malawi and Tanzania. ([Vesel et al, BMJ Open 2023](#); [Semrau et al, PLOS Glob Public Health 2023](#); [Caruso et al, PLOS Glob Public Health 2023](#); [Saidi et al, J Glob Health 2023](#); [Vernekar et al, BJOG 2023](#))

Wesley Wong (Research Scientist, Immunology and Infectious Diseases) published a manuscript entitled "From vaccine to pathogen: Modeling Sabin 2 vaccine virus reversion and evolutionary epidemiology in Matlab, Bangladesh" in *Virus Evolution*. This work describes the simulation of Poliovirus Type 2 transmission and genetic reversion to inform cVDPV2 (circulating, vaccine-derived Type 2 poliovirus) outbreak risk. doi: [10.1093/ve/vead044](https://doi.org/10.1093/ve/vead044)

Presentations

Vincenzo Bollettino (Senior Research Scientist, Global Health and Population) presented “Understanding Filipino’s Perspectives on and Experience with Climate Change and Disasters” at the 24th Hiroshima University Network for Education and Research on Peace and Sustainability in September 2023. The full description and video recording are [here](#).

Susan Peters (Research Scientist, Social and Behavioral Sciences) gave two Keynote Presentations at Madison County Department of Public Health Healthy Businesses Conference on October 4, 2023. The two presentations were entitled: “Worker health and well-being in the post-pandemic world” and “Thriving from Work: A framework for worker well-being and organizational resilience”.

Linda Vesel (Senior Research Scientist, Health Policy and Management) led the dissemination of the results from the Low Birthweight Infant Feeding Exploration (LIFE) study conducted in India, Malawi and Tanzania. In her role as the co-PI and Scientific Lead within the study consortium, she presented the results at the [International Maternal and Newborn Health Conference in Cape Town](#) in May 2023.



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