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# The Translator:

The Bi-annual Newsletter of the Doctoral Program in Clinical & Population Health Research  
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Massachusetts Medical School

## TANYA LORD, MPH AWARDED HEALTH SERVICES DISSERTATION GRANT FROM THE AGENCY HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY



Tanya Lord, MPH, is a fourth year student in the CPHR program with an interest in Patient Safety research. She was recently awarded a Health Services Dissertation grant from the Agency Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). This grant will support her dissertation research evaluating the effectiveness of the Rapid Response System that was fully implemented at the University and Memorial hospitals, in January, 2009. Roger Luckmann, MPH, MD in Family Medicine and Community Health is her mentor and the director of the Rapid Response System. A Rapid Response System (RRS) is a hospital program that provides the means for bringing qualified clinicians immediately to the bedsides of patients outside of the intensive care unit (ICU) setting who are experiencing significant clinical decline, usually manifest by the occurrence of one or more "trigger" signs such as low blood pressure or increased heart or respiratory rate. The objective of an RRS is early identification of clinical decline with effective early intervention to prevent further decline, cardiac arrest and death. The 12 months prior to RRS implementation and the 24 months following will be evaluated for changes in floor to ICU transfers, cardiac ar-

rest outside of the ICU and hospital wide mortality. Additionally a modified process evaluation of the RRS will be conducted.

## 2010 GRADUATES FIND PRESTIGIOUS POSITIONS AFTER UMASS

Dr. Hoa Nguyen has accepted an Associate Research Scientist position in the Section of Cardiovascular Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine at Yale University School of Medicine. As part of the Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CORE) research team, Dr. Nguyen will participate actively in several research projects, serving as an analyst and co-investigator. Her principal responsibilities will be on NIH-funded study of young women with an acute myocardial infarction.



Dr. Hoa Nguyen



Dr. James Potts

Dr. James Potts has accepted a position as a Biostatistician at the Global Medical Affairs branch of Biogen Idec in Wellesley, MA. He will participate in multiple Phase IV studies, including involvement in study design discussions and running scenarios and modeling to determine the best strategy for any Phase IV study. Additionally, he will develop and carry out statistical analysis plans, and help prepare study reports for presentation and publication.

## THESIS & THESIS PROPOSAL TOPICS DEFENDED

**Student:** Yong Chen

**Mentor:** Becky Briesacher, PhD

**Thesis Research Advisory Committee Chair:** Jeroan Allison, MD, MPH

**Dissertation Proposal:** Examining the Comparative Effectiveness of Two Bisphosphonates on Non-vertebral Fractures in Postmenopausal Women: An Instrumental Variable Approach”

**Student:** Yendelela Cuffee

**Mentor:** Jeroan Allison, MD, MPH

**Thesis Research Advisory Committee Chair:** Lee Hargraves, PhD

**Dissertation Proposal:** Sociocultural and Behavioral Determinants of Medication Adherence among African Americans

**Student:** Gary Leung

**Mentor:** Robin Clark, PhD

**Dissertation Exam Committee Chair:** Becky Briesacher, PhD

**Dissertation:** Behavioral Health Disorders and the Quality of Diabetes Care

**Student:** Patrick McCabe

**Mentor:** William Fisher, PhD

**Thesis Research Advisory Committee Chair:** Carl Fulwiler, MD, MPH

**Dissertation Proposal:** Cannabis Use and Bipolar Disorder: Bipolar Disorder Case Identification and Cannabis Use Risk Assessment

**Student:** Hoa Nguyen

**Mentor:** Robert Goldberg, PhD

**Dissertation Exam Committee Chair:** Joel Gore, MD

**Dissertation:** Age and Sex Differences in Duration of Pre-Hospital Delay, Hospital Treatment Practices, and Short-Term Outcomes in Patients with Acute Coronary Syndrome/Acute Myocardial Infarction

**Student:** Hilary Placzek

**Mentor:** Lawrence Madoff, MD

**Thesis Research Advisory Committee Chair:** Alan Rothman, MD

**Dissertation Proposal:** Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Predictors of Mortality and Severity Among Hospitalized H1N1 Cases in the Massachusetts Population and According to Race/Ethnicity and Age

**Student:** James Potts

**Mentor:** Alan Rothman, MD

**Dissertation Exam Committee Chair:** George Reed, PhD

**Dissertation:** Description, Classification, and Prediction of Dengue Illnesses in a Thai Pediatric Cohort



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*Students are encouraged to publish their qualifying papers and thesis work, as well as to join publication teams in their research groups. The five publications listed here are among the 22 papers CPHR students have published in the last five years.*

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## STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Bergmann, JF, Cohen, AT, Tapson, VF, Goldhaber, SZ, Kakkar, AK, Deslandes, B, **Huang, W**, Anderson, FA. Venous thromboembolism risk and prophylaxis in hospitalised medically ill patients. The ENDORSE Global Survey. *Thromb Haemost.* 2010 Feb 2;103(4).

**Fischer, SH**, Tjia, J, Field, TS “The Impact of Health Information Technology Interventions to Improve Medication Laboratory Monitoring for Ambulatory Patients: A Systematic Review.” *JAMIA*, In Press, 2010.

Kakkar, AK, Cohen, AT, Tapson, VF, Bergmann, JF, Goldhaber, SZ, Deslandes, B, **Huang, W**, Anderson, FA. Venous thromboembolism risk and prophylaxis in the acute care hospital setting (ENDORSE survey): findings in surgical patients. *Ann Surg.* 2010 Feb;251(2):330-8.

**Nguyen, HL**, Saczynski, JS, Gore, JM, Goldberg, RJ. Age and sex differences in duration of prehospital delay in patients with acute myocardial infarction: a systematic review. *Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes.* 2010 Jan 1;3(1):82-92. Epub 2009 Nov 24.

**Nguyen, HL**, Goldberg, RJ, Gore, JM, Fox, KA, Eagle, KA, Gurfinkel, EP, Spencer, FA, Reed, GW, Quill, AL, Anderson, FA. Age and sex differences, and changing trends, in the use of evidence-based therapies in acute coronary syndromes: perspectives from a multi-national registry. *Coron Artery Dis.* 2010 Jul 26.

## LARGEST CLASS EVER ENTERING IN 2010

**Carol Curtin** earned her BA in Sociology and Psychology at Trinity College in Hartford, CT and her MSW in Casework and Groupwork at the Boston University School of Social Work. She is currently a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at UMass Medical School and is the Associate Director of the LEND and UCEDD programs at the UMMS-E.K. Shriver Center in Waltham. Carol's research focuses on health promotion for persons with developmental disabilities; she is interested in the biopsychosocial determinants of health and mental health, and in health disparities, health care access, health literacy, and improved health outcomes in this population.

**Barbara Gandek** earned a BA in Economics from Swarthmore College and an MS in Health Policy and Management from Harvard School of Public Health. Since earning her MS, she spent two decades at The Health Institute at NEMC, Health Assessment Lab, and QualityMetric Incorporated. She is currently an Instructor at Tufts University School of Medicine. Barbara's research focuses on patient-reported outcomes measurement, and she has co-authored eight manuals and 40 articles about the SF-36 Health Survey and other PRO instruments. Barbara is interested in the development of new techniques to interpret PRO measures and international PRO research.

**Alexandra Hajduk** earned a BS in Health Sciences from Northeastern University and a MPH in Applied Health Practice from the University of Connecticut. She has been a prevention program manager for the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts and a laboratory technologist at Massachusetts General Hospital. While obtaining her master's at UConn, Alexandra gained valuable quantitative and qualitative research experience through work on HIV prevention in India, and biomarker identification for cancer survival. Her thesis research was on the relationships between inflammatory biomarkers, obesity measures, and colorectal cancer mortality. Alexandra's interests include epidemiological methods and clinical trials.

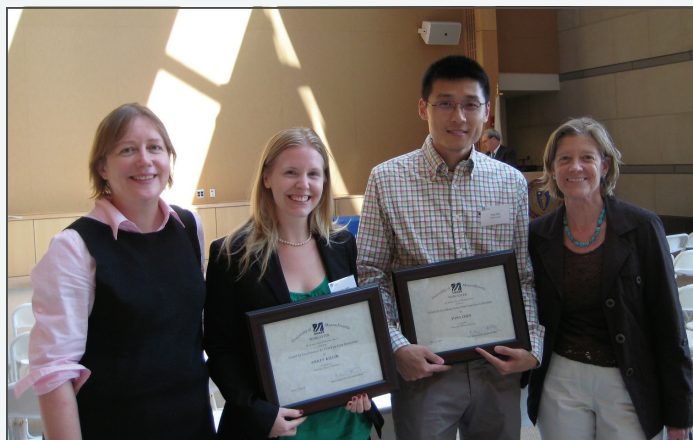
**Lisa Lines** holds a BS in Technical Communications (Biomedical Sciences Concentration) from Northeastern University and an MPH from UMass Amherst. She has over 12 years of healthcare and consulting experience, most recently at RTI International, where she works on Medicare payment reform research in the post-acute care setting. Prior to RTI, she was at Boston Health Economics, where she managed health economic and outcomes research studies, including designing decision-analytic models, conducting large-scale database analyses, developing utility instruments, and performing systematic literature reviews. She has co-authored six peer-reviewed journal articles with another in review and has presented abstracts at many national and international conferences. Her main research interests lie in health services and outcomes research, particularly predictive modeling.

**Alan Rathbun** graduated from Rider University with a BS (Magna Cum Laude) in Biology, and earned a MPH in Epidemiology from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) School of Public Health. While attending graduate school he worked for the Violence Institute of New Jersey at the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services Center for Health Statistics (NJDHSS CHS) with their New Jersey Violent Death Reporting System (NJVDERS) research group where he completed his graduate thesis, "Potential Predictive Factors of Suicide: An Analysis of the Determinants Between Varying Mechanisms of Suicide Incidence in NJ." After completing his MPH, Alan was an intern for a consultant to CRI Worldwide Clinical Trials Research, and most recently an Evaluation Intern to the Program Developer & Evaluator of the Cardiovascular Disease Control & Prevention Initiative at the Bureau of Chronic Disease Control within the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene. Alan's research interests include non-infectious diseases, injury prevention, pharmacoepidemiology, and statistical methods in population health research.

**Sanouri Ursprung** earned her BS in International Studies/Biochemistry from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 2008. She has worked as a Research Coordinator since 2002 for Dr. Joseph DiFranza at UMMS, conducting research analyzing the progression of addiction in adolescents and adults. In addition, since 2008, she has been working with Dr. Chyke Doubeni on research regarding the impact of socio-economic status on access to cancer prevention services and the potential uses of geocoded census data to identify high risk patients and tailor their cure. Sanouri has eight publications (three first author) with several articles in review. Her research interests include addiction research, studying health disparities in general, and more specifically in low socioeconomic strata with a focus on cancer screening services, and public health problems facing disadvantaged populations abroad.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

First and second year students, Ashley Keller and Yong Chen, received awards for Outstanding Achievement in the Core Curriculum at the first annual Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences' *Celebration of Student Achievement* on June 6, 2010.



Pictured left to right: Becky Briesacher, PhD, Ashley Keller, Yong Chen, Carole Upshur, EdD

## PROFILE: CHARMAINE LO — SHRIVER CENTER

Charmaine is a second year student in the CPHR program. She is a recent graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Prior to her enrollment at UMMS she was involved in a multi-site study examining physician and patient reasons for HIV testing, and conducted research in the effectiveness of smoking cessation programs in veterans. She also published a research article on the inclusion of complementary and alternative medicine in Comprehensive Cancer Control Plans. These experiences in concert with her CPHR coursework are aiding research with the UMMS-Shriver Center, where she is involved in several studies that are examining health promotion behaviors in children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). She is currently working on two projects at the Shriver Center—the Teens Activity and Recreation (TRAC) study and the Supporting Physical Activity and Recreation in the Community (SPARC) study, and also contributed to a study investigating body composition in adolescent girls with Down's Syndrome. She was recently awarded a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Fellowship, which will allow her to further refine her skills in conducting research and contribute to her work developing interventions to promote healthy lifestyle behaviors in this population.



*“My experiences at the Shriver Center have really exposed me to the great health disparities that people with disabilities face. There is a definite need for more research efforts and implementation of preventive behaviors for this population.”*

*— CPHR Student, Charmaine Lo, MPH*



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## ABOUT CPHR

The Clinical & Population Health Research (CPHR) doctoral program is one of the few in the country that was specifically designed to address the new challenges in biomedical research. These include speeding the translation of knowledge from the explosion in basic sciences to patient care interventions, and assuring that new evidence-based medicine reaches the populations that can benefit from it. The CPHR program promotes an interdisciplinary approach to conducting research and provides a strong focus on addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. Currently the program has more than 70 affiliated faculty representing 31 departments and centers at UMMS.

The CPHR core courses provide cutting-edge research training in all areas of NIH-defined clinical research: from initial translation from lab to clinic, and from clinical trials to population health. Our students will graduate with the advanced skills and knowledge in biostatistics, epidemiology, and the genetic, behavioral, social, and health service predictors of individual health status needed to be successful clinical researchers.

The program currently has an enrollment of 19 PhD students one MD/PhD student and admits a group of 4-6 new students each year. Most students have master's degrees in Public Health or related disciplines from such institutions as: Boston University, Columbia University, Georgia Tech, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, New York Medical College, Oxford University (UK), University of Alabama, University of Oklahoma, University of Massachusetts, University of Michigan, and University of New Hampshire.

Learn more: [www.umassmed.edu/cphr](http://www.umassmed.edu/cphr)