



Clinical &
Population
Health Research

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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

RECENT GRADS FIND INTERESTING WORK

The Clinical and Population Health Research Program is no longer small and new. Now in its 7th year, we have admitted 39 PhD and MD/PhD students and over the last year increased our graduates into double digits. Our 14 graduates took on average, 4 years from entry to complete their doctoral courses and thesis research, but several have finished in just over three years! One of our MD/PHD students has now returned to her fourth year of medical school. All of our other graduates are pursuing careers in health research in various capacities and are successfully employed in academic medicine, the biotech industry, federal agencies, state public health organizations, private health research organizations, and university public health programs. Our most recent graduates include Yong Chen, Lauren Geller, Tanya Lord, and Huifang Zhao.

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Graduate, Tanya Lord, PhD, hooded by Gyongyi Szabo, MD/PhD and Ira Ockene, MD

RECENT GRADS FIND INTERESTING WORK (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Dr. Chen completed his thesis under the direction of Dr. Becky Briesacher, PhD, in the fall of 2011 focused on methodological approaches to assessing medication outcomes. His thesis was titled: "Comparative Effectiveness of Alendronate and Risedronate on the Risk of Non-Vertebral Fractures in Older Women: An Instrumental Variable Approach". He is currently a Senior Associate for HealthCore/WellPoint, an organization that serves Blue Cross and Blue Shield programs across the country. Dr. Chen is assessing safety and effectiveness of pharmaceutical products for insurers.

Dr. Geller is a tenure-track Assistant Professor in Public Health Nutrition, at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. She is combining teaching with developing a research program on nutritional interventions to improve health, particularly focused on obesity, diabetes, metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease risk in youth. She completed her thesis in the spring of 2011 under the direction of Dr. Lori Pbert, PhD, on, "The Effect of Glycemic Index and Glycemic Load on Glucose Control, Lipid Profiles and Anthropometrics among Low Income Latinos with Type 2 Diabetes."

Dr. Lord is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Office of Quality and Patient Safety at UMass Memorial Health Care. She is following up on her dissertation work evaluating the outcomes of various hospital safety initiatives, "Early Detection and Treatment of Acute Clinical Decline in Hospitalized Patients: An Observational Study of ICU Transfers and an Assessment of the Effectiveness of a Rapid Response Program". Her mentor was Dr. Roger Luckmann, MD, MPH, a Quality Officer of UMMHC. Dr. Lord's dissertation research was supported by an AHRQ Dissertation Award. She graduated in the summer of 2011.

Also staying on campus, Dr. Zhao is a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Orthopedics at UMass Memorial Health Care. She completed her thesis research in the spring of 2011 under the direction of Dr. Craig Lilly, MD. Her work focused on sepsis in hospitalized patients: "Improved Methods of Sepsis Case Identification and the Effects of Treatment with Low Dose Steroids." She is working on Dr. Patricia Franklin's multi-site study: "Improving Orthopedic Outcomes through a National Total Joint Replacement Registry." Dr. Zhao is conducting data analysis and also collecting accelerometer data from patients in a total knee replacement study.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Jeffrey D. Baxter, Robin E. Clark, Mihail Samnaliev, **Gary Y. Leung**, Lobat Hashemi, Factors associated with Medicaid patients' access to buprenorphine treatment, *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, Volume 41, Issue 1, July 2011, Pages 88-96.

Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson, Sally I. Powers, Leslie Spangler, Robert L. Brunner, Yvonne L. Michael, Joseph C. Larson, Amy E. Millen, Maria N. Bueche, **Elena Salmoirago Blotcher**, Simin Liu, Sylvia Wassertheil-Smoller, Judith K. Ockene, Ira S. Ockene, and JoAnn E. Manson, Vitamin D intake from foods and supplements and depressive symptoms in a diverse Population of Older Women. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2011 Oct;94(4):1104-12.

Wei Huang, Charlotte A. Gaydos, Mathilda R. Barnes, Mary Jett-Goheen, and Diane R. Blake, Cost-effectiveness Analysis of Chlamydia trachomatis Screening Via Internet-based Self-collected Swabs Compared With Clinic-based Sample Collection. *Sex Transm Dis*. 2011 Sep;38(9):815-20.

Yat (Gary) Leung, Jianying Zhang, Wen-Chieh Lin, and Robin E. Clark, Behavioral Disorders and Diabetes-Related Outcomes Among Massachusetts Medicare and Medicaid Beneficiaries. *Psychiatric Services* 2011 62(6):659-665.

Craig M. Lilly, Shawn Cody, **Huifang Zhao**, Karen Landry, Stephen P. Baker, John McIlwaine, M. Willis Chandler, and Richard S. Irwin, Hospital Mortality, Length of Stay, and Preventable Complications Among Critically Ill Patients Before and After Tele-ICU Reengineering of Critical Care Processes. *JAMA*. 2011;305(21):2175-2183.

Hoa L. Nguyen, Jane S. Saczynski, Joel M. Gore, Molly E. Waring, Darleen M. Lessard, Jorge L. Yarzebski, George W. Reed, Frederick A. Spencer, Shu-Xia Li, and Robert J. Goldberg, Long-term Trends in Short-term Outcomes in Acute Myocardial Infarction. *Am J Med*. 2011 Oct;124(10):939-46.

Hilary Placzek and Lawrence C. Madoff, Identification of Influenza Cases during the H1N1 Pandemic in Massachusetts Using Population-Based Hospital Discharge Data. *PLoS Curr*. 2011 Aug 14;3:RRN1256.

Elena Salmoirago-Blotcher, Sybil Crawford, James Carmody, Lawrence Rosenthal, and Ira Ockene. Characteristics of Dispositional Mindfulness in Patients with Severe Cardiac Disease. *Journal of Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine* 2156587211405525, published on line ahead of print, April 25, 2011.

Elena Salmoirago Blotcher, Sybil L. Crawford, Elizabeth A. Jackson, Judith K. Ockene, and Ira S. Ockene, Constipation and Risk of Cardiovascular Disease among Postmenopausal Women. *Am J Med*. 2011 Jun 8.

Jennifer Tjia, Terry S. Field, **Shira H. Fischer**, Shawn J. Gagne, Daniel J. Peterson, Lawrence D. Garber, and Jerry H. Gurwitz, Quality measurement of medication monitoring in the "meaningful use." *Am J Manag Care*. 2011 Sep;17(9):633-7.

Jennifer Tjia, **Shira H. Fischer**, Marsha A. Raebel, Daniel J. Peterson, Yanfang Zhao, Shawn J. Gagne, Jerry H. Gurwitz, and Terry S. Field, Baseline and Follow-up Laboratory Monitoring of Cardiovascular Medications. *Ann Pharmacother*. 2011 Sep;45(9):1077-84.

CPHR FAST FACTS

Our students are from:

Argentina
China
Egypt
Italy
United States
Vietnam

Our students have varied advanced degrees:

MA Environmental Science
MA Public Policy
MD
MPH
MS Biology & Biotechnology
MS Epidemiology
MS Nutrition & Public Health
MSW

Our students have worked at:

Bayer Diagnostics
Harvard Medical School
Massachusetts General Hospital
National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Hanoi, Vietnam
National Organization for Vaccination and Biological Products, Cairo
New York State Psychiatric Institute
NH Department of Public Health and Human Services
Shanghai CDC
University of Massachusetts Medical School

NEW CLASS

The class admitted in fall 2011 includes 3 full time and 2 part-time Professional Track students. The cumulative background in prior research experience is impressive.

Daniel Amante earned a BA from College of the Holy Cross in Psychology in 2007 and a MPH from Boston University in 2010. His research experience includes working in an Experimental Neuropathology Translations Therapeutics Lab collecting, analyzing and reporting data from various behavioral, protein quantifications and histology methods; administering therapeutics to mice, collecting vital organs, breeding and maintaining mice colonies, and he reviewed, contributed to and wrote research manuscripts. He completed a summer internship in the UMMS Department of Quantitative Sciences with Dr. Kiefe designing data collection and analysis for a project focused on examining health care price transparency in MA. He currently is a Project Coordinator for the TRACE-CORE study (Transitions, risks and Actions in Coronary Events Center), contributing to development of protocols, surveys and medical record abstraction tools plus recruiting, obtaining consent and interviewing patients enrolled in the Center. His research interests include exploring the utilization of health information technology. He is in the part-time Professional Track.

Camilla Marie Benedicto earned an AB from Brown University in Community Health and has an MPH in Sociomedical Sciences-Aging and Public Health from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. She recently completed a two year role as an NCI-designated Presidential Management Fellow and worked as a public health advisor at the National Cancer Institute, Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences. She was the evaluation officer for the Epidemiology and Genetics Research Program, facilitated data sharing for the NIH database of Genotypes and Phenotypes (dbGaP) and managed the Cancer Genome-wide Association and Meta Analyses data base (TGAMAdb). She was previously a public policy intern at the NYC Long Term Care Community Coalition and a research assistant at Columbia University on injury-related health disparities. Her goal is to conduct clinical research at an NCI-designated cancer center and to advance initiatives for the special health care needs of older adults. Ms. Benedicto is a full time student.

Rebecca Kinney holds a BA and MPH from UMass Amherst. She was a Research Associate for the Massachusetts Workforce Development Project, a study funded by the Massachusetts Medicaid program for 5 years, and currently is a Research Coordinator for the Division of Health Information Technology in the Department of Quantitative Health Sciences at UMMS. She is interested in preventive health interventions and chronic disease. She is a part-time Professional Track student.

Christine Ulbricht holds a BA in Psychology and an MPH in Epidemiology from University of Maryland, College Park. She held a staff position for four years in the National Institute of Mental Health, Division of Services and Intervention Research. While at NIMH she served as a liaison to federal agencies involved in psychiatric epidemiology, was the NIMH Clinical Trials.gov administrator, and supported activities of the Clinical Trials Operations and Biostatistics Unit overseeing multi-site clinical trials managed by NIMH. She is a full time student interested in psychiatric epidemiology, comparative effectiveness, and clinical trials methodology.

Mollie Wood has a BA from Miami University in Ohio in Zoology and Psychology, and an MPH from Boston University with a concentration in Epidemiology. Her recent work was as a biostatistician at Inflexion Inc., which specializes in behavioral research. Her role included all stages of clinical trial design as well as analysis of clinical trial, survey and surveillance data. She was previously employed at Beth Israel Hospital and McLean Hospital/ Cambridge Health Alliance as a research coordinator. She conducted statistical analyses, prepared manuscripts, and managed neuroimaging studies of children with mood and psychotic disorders. She has several publications and posters. Ms. Wood is a full time student. Her research interested include early -onset mental illness, perinatal and early childhood epidemiology, epidemiologic methods and applied Bayesian analytics.

STUDENT PROFILE: LISA LINES

Lisa recently won a student travel award to attend the International Conference on Health Policy Statistics in Cleveland where she presented a poster entitled "Quantile Regression Analysis of the Effect of Health Maintenance Organization Enrollment on Medical Expenditures." The poster came out of an independent study with Drs. Jeroan Allison and Arlene Ash, who were also coauthors. Lisa is a second year student working on her qualifying paper, which is a review of the predictors of potentially avoidable emergency department visits. Her background includes a BS in Technical Communications (Biomedical Sciences Concentration) from Northeastern University and an MPH from UMass Amherst. Before coming to CPHR, she had over 12 years of experience in health economics/health policy research and health care consulting, and she has co-authored seven publications.



"The CPHR program has been a great fit for me, especially in terms of the curriculum and program structure. I have gotten the opportunity to work with some great researchers – both faculty and other students. The program is giving me the tools I will need to conduct policy-relevant, high-quality studies that make an impact in health services research."

— Lisa Lines, MPH, Second Year CPHR Student



Clinical & Population Health Research

Clinical & Population Health Research
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
University of Massachusetts
Medical School
55 Lake Avenue North
Worcester, MA 01655-0002

Phone: 508-334-2112
E-mail: CPHR@umassmed.edu
www.umassmed.edu/cphr

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, 6 MD/PhD students 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 Maryland, University of Massachusetts, University of Michigan, and University of New Hampshire.