

Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Weekly Newsletter

JANUARY 26-30, 2026



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

WELCOME



We are delighted to welcome **Ariel Hoadley, PhD** as Assistant Professor in PQHS. Ariel completed her PhD at Temple University and a T32 postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University. Her research examines how stigma, discrimination, and structural barriers affect sleep, mental health, treatment engagement, and OUD recovery. She joins Rosemarie Martin's team with methodological expertise and commitment to advancing health equity and community-engaged approaches.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, February 4, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Presenter: JungAe Lee, PhD, Assistant Professor, Biostatistics and Health Services Research

Title: Navigating Biases in Real-World Evidence: A Tutorial on Robust Study Designs for EHR and Claims Data

Abstract: This presentation provides a methodological overview of epidemiologic approaches for analyzing large-scale healthcare data, including electronic health records and insurance claims. Using the historical evolution of menopausal hormone therapy as a motivating case study, we illustrate how evidence from randomized clinical trials and observational studies may yield divergent

conclusions when methodological challenges are not adequately addressed. We focus on key sources of bias in pharmacoepidemiologic research, including healthy user bias, immortal time bias, and confounding by indication. The presentation reviews robust study designs in observational studies—such as new-user active-comparator designs, nested case-control studies, and self-controlled designs—and discusses their appropriate application across varying exposure patterns and clinical outcomes. Overall, this session aims to provide practical guidance for selecting study designs and statistical models that strengthen causal inference in real-world data analyses.

Bio: Jung Ae Lee, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Biostatistics in the Department of Population & Quantitative Health Sciences at UMass Chan Medical School. Her research focuses on real-world evidence, leveraging large-scale electronic health records, claims data, and wearable-device data to study cardiometabolic and cancer-related outcomes. She has extensive expertise in causal inference, longitudinal modeling, and pragmatic study designs, and collaborates closely with interdisciplinary clinical and public health research teams. Click [here](#) to join.



Monday, February 9, 11:00 – 11:30 AM

Live Webinar: OAI CORE Knowledgebase

Join our upcoming webinar: Current State of the Osteoarthritis Initiative (OAI) Data Usage and Introduction to the OAI Knowledgebase, presented by [Dr. Jeffrey Driban](#) (Director, OAI CORE Knowledgebase), Professor of Epidemiology, PQHS.

For questions or support, contact us at oaiknowledgebase@umassmed.edu.
[Register here](#).



Monday, February 9, 1:00 – 2:15 PM

Gerontology Speaker Series

Presenter: Yalu Zhang, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook University

Title: Aging in Transition: How Shifting Living Arrangements Shape Later Life

Abstract: Transitioning to living alone is a major life event, but is it a consistent risk factor for depression? Dr. Yalu Zhang will present a longitudinal analysis showing that the impact of living arrangements is dynamic and highly contextual. This series of studies identified a "critical window" of risk two years post-transition and highlights how rurality and family roles greatly affect outcomes. The seminar will also

discuss how older adults use active coping strategies to buffer these shocks and what this means for future community-based practices and social policies.

Bio: Dr. Zhang's research centers on aging, health equity, and social mobility, with a focus on applying advanced quantitative strategies to understand the nuanced dynamics of later life.

Zoom: <https://umassboston.zoom.us/j/94175483404> Password: Boston

For more information contact Qian Song: Qian.Song@umb.edu

International Day of Commemoration

Each year on **January 27**, we observe the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, marking the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945. This day honors the memory of the six million Jewish victims and the millions of others who were persecuted by the Nazis. It calls on us to remember how antisemitism, racism, and state-sponsored hate can erode humanity step by step, leading to genocide.

By reflecting on the past, we reaffirm a shared responsibility to defend human dignity and human rights wherever they are threatened. Around the world, communities mark this day by remembering each victim as an individual, listening to the voices of survivors, and supporting education that confronts denial, distortion, and the resurgence of hate.

Learn more at: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/commemoration-holocaust-victims-day>

UMASS CHAN REMINDERS

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

**Holiday Schedule for 2026:**

- Presidents Day – Monday, February 16th
- Patriots' Day – Monday, April 20th
- Memorial Day – Monday, May 25th
- Juneteenth National Independence Day – Friday, June 19th
- Independence Day – Friday, July 3rd (observed)
- Labor Day – Monday, September 7th
- Indigenous Peoples' Day – Monday, October 12th
- Veterans Day – Wednesday, November 11th
- Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 26th
- Day After Thanksgiving – Friday, November 27th
- Christmas Eve – Thursday, December 24th
- Christmas Day – Friday, December 25th

PQHS Weekly will be sent to all members of PQHS on Monday mornings. The intent is to provide a snapshot of what is going on that week in PQHS and to share our faculty and staff activities with the department. We depend on you to provide the items we need to share. Please send suggestions of events, faculty invited seminars & talks, honors, student thesis presentations, and news – new babies born! – to Judi (judi.saber@umassmed.edu) & Sarah (sarah.yeboah@umassmed.edu) by Friday each week.