

SPM NEWS

Department of Social & Preventive Medicine

School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP)

State University of New York at Buffalo

<http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/spm>



February 2008

Marcia Wopperer, editor

The Director's Corner

We congratulate Pavani Ram on her new position as assistant professor in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine effective January 2008. Dr. Ram received her A.B. degree in Middle East Languages and Cultures from Columbia College, Columbia University in 1993, and her M.D. degree from Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NY in 1998. She has served as a medical epidemiologist at the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), working in the Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Branch. Dr. Ram joined the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine in 2005 as a research assistant professor. Her work has focused on methods to prevent and control diarrheal diseases, particularly in the developing world with projects that include research on handwashing, oral rehydration and safe water in Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina.

SPHHP is making progress in developing the self study materials needed for accreditation of the school. Several working groups, which include student representatives, were created in February in order to further work on the self-study. We anticipate submitting the self-study document to the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) during the Fall 2008 semester. Our official site visit is scheduled for May 4-6, 2009. This will set the stage for achieving certification at the Fall 2009 Board Meeting of CEPH.

We have begun to plan for the American Public Health Association (APHA) meeting to be held in October 2008 in sunny San Diego. We will be soliciting your input soon on how to enhance the visibility of the school at the annual meeting.

- Carl Li, M.D., M.P.H.

Honors and Awards

The following awards were presented at the School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP) 19th Annual J. Warren Perry Lecture held on November 2, 2007:



Christine Ambrosone, Ph.D., is the recipient of the 2007 *Academic Achievement Award*. This award recognizes the efforts of alumni and their long-standing volunteer academic service to one or more academic programs within the school. Nominees must be alumnus/alumna of the school with a minimum of five years of volunteer service to one or more of SPHHP's academic programs.



Jo Freudenheim, Ph.D., received the 2007 *Outstanding Researcher of the Year Award* from the School of Public Health and Health Professions.



Mary Platek, M.S., was awarded the 2007 *Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions (ASAHP) Scholarship for Excellence*. The scholarship recognizes outstanding students in allied health programs who are achieving excellence in their academic pursuits and have significant potential to assume future leadership roles in allied health.

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Menghua Tao, Ph.D., received an *American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) AstraZeneca Scholar-in-Training Award* to support attendance at the AACR Annual Meeting to be held in San Diego, April 12-16. This highly competitive award was offered to fewer than ten percent of all applicants.

American Association for Cancer Research

The American Association for Cancer Research will hold its annual meeting April 12-16 in San Diego, CA. The following abstracts have been accepted for presentation:

Susan McCann, Ph.D., “*Dietary Lignan and Survival in Women with Breast Cancer in the Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study.*”

Amy Millen, Ph.D., “*Association Between Incident Breast Cancer and Geographic Location of Residence in the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) Observational Study.*”

Mary Platek, M.S., “*Genetic Variation in Methionine Synthase (MTR) and Risk of Breast Cancer: The Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study.*”

Menghua Tao, Ph.D., “*Alcohol Consumption and DNA Hypermethylation in Breast Cancer: The Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study.*”

J. Warren Perry Lecture

The School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP) 19th Annual J. Warren Perry Lecture was held on November 2 in Harriman Hall. Poster presentations were made by the following students/fellows/faculty:

Tammy Austin-Ketch, M.S., “*An Exploratory Study: PTSD and Salivary Cortisol in a Working Cohort of Upstate New York Police Officers*”

Joan Dorn, Ph.D., “*A Comparison Between Corporate Environmental Support for Wellness and Individual Employee Health Risks and Behaviors*”

Brian King, M.P.H., “*Secondhand Smoke Exposure Among Multi-unit Housing Residents in Western New York*”

Michael Noe, M.D., M.P.H., “*The Health Improvement Project (HIP): An Intensive Medical Intervention for Class III Obesity and Results of a Pilot Study*”

Pavani Ram, M.D., “*Household Water Disinfection in Hurricane-Affected Communities of Louisiana: Implications for Disaster Preparedness for the General Public*”

Raymond Skeps, M.S., “*Predictors of Smoking Cessation Pharmacotherapy Use Among Medicaid Recipients*”

Menghua Tao, Ph.D., “*Alcohol Consumption Associations with DNA Hypermethylation in Breast Cancer: The*

Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study”

Faculty/Student Research

Amy Millen, Ph.D., was awarded a two-year, \$96,640 grant from the NIH/National Eye Institute entitled “*Dietary and Lifestyle Factors Reducing the Risk of Age-Related Eye Disease.*” The grant will determine whether vitamin D status at WHI-OS baseline (1994-97), assessed using serum 25-hydroxy vitamin D₃ (25(OH)D₃) concentrations, are associated with prevalent AMD, assessed in 2001-04, and whether these relationships reflect lower inflammation, measured by levels of C-reactive protein.

Kirsten Moysich, Ph.D., was awarded a \$276,956 three-year grant entitled “*Regulatory T Cells in Ovarian Carcinogenesis*” from the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation. The study will help to determine the role of genetic variability in regulatory T cell function in the etiology and prognosis of ovarian cancer.

Pavani Ram, M.D., was awarded a \$75,031 contract from the World Bank entitled “*Improving Indicators and Methods to Measure Handwashing Practices.*” The World Bank is launching a large initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to examine the impact of scaling up handwashing promotion in four countries: Peru, Senegal, Tanzania, and Viet Nam. Pavani is a member of the global impact evaluation team and is assisting with measuring the change in handwashing behavior as a result of intensive promotion at scale.

William Wieczorek, Ph.D., was recently awarded a \$3.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIH/NIAAA) entitled “*Initiation and Continuation of Drinking and Driving Behavior.*” The five-year study will follow up subjects who had participated in a study of drinking and delinquency among young men in 1992-1995. The subjects will be re-interviewed by telephone to provide a 12-year wave-4 followup.

Faculty/Student Presentations

Gary Giovino, Ph.D., was an invited presenter at the American Association for Cancer Research Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research Workshop on Linking Tobacco Control Policies and Practices to Early Cancer Endpoints: Surveillance as an Agent for Change held in Philadelphia on December 4. The title of his presentation was “*Agent and Environment (Surveillance of Tobacco Products and Tobacco Control Policies).*”

Brian King, M.P.H., presented a poster entitled “*New York Tobacco Retailers’ Attitudes Toward Lower Taxed and Untaxed Cigarettes*” at the 14th Annual Meeting of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT) in Portland, OR, February 27 to March 1. Brian received a *Robert O’Shea Travel Award* to provide financial assistance to present his research.

Allen Leavens, M.D., M.S., presented a poster entitled “*Medical Student Pathways to Research and the Role of Preventive Medicine*” at the Preventive Medicine 2008 meeting held in Austin, TX, February 20-24.

News and Notes

Kirsten Moysich, Ph.D. has been appointed professor of epidemiology at the University of Central Lancashire in the UK.

Jean Wactawski-Wende, Ph.D., was recently elected to co-chair the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) Publications and Presentations Committee, and serve on the Executive Committee for the NIH sponsored WHI Study. Her term will run from April 2008 until October 2010.

Amy Van Deusen, M.P.H., ('07) has accepted a position as program manager, Survey Research at the Statistics and Evaluation Center at the American Cancer Society home office in Atlanta.

John Violanti, Ph.D., served on the invited panel of the Research Agenda in Officer Wellness and Work Performance to evaluate The Buffalo Cardio Metabolic Occupational Stress (BCOPS) Study at the International Association of Law Enforcement Planners (IALEP) Conference held in Calgary in October 2007.

Welcome New Students

The following students officially matriculated in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine for the Spring 08 semester.

Ph.D. Epidemiology

Jacqueline Mix, M.P.H., University at Buffalo. Jacquie was awarded a graduate assistantship for her first semester in the program.

M.S. Epidemiology

Philip Smith – B.A. Psychology, University of Rochester

M.P.H. (Epidemiology)

Tonya Carr – B.A. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, University at Buffalo

February 2008 Graduates

The following students successfully completed all degree requirements established by the Department of SPM and the University at Buffalo for February 2008 degree conferral. Congratulations to our graduates!

Ph.D. Epidemiology and Community Health

Elie Akl, M.D., M.P.H., “*The Migration of Lebanese Medical Graduates into the U.S. Physician Workforce: Description and Exploration of the Causes of a Public Health Crisis.*” Committee members include Drs. Holger Schunemann (major), Carl Li and Brydon J.D. Grant. Elie is an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at the University at Buffalo.

M.P.H. (Epidemiology)

Tsering Dhondup, M.B.B.S., “*Diabetes in a Tibetan Community.*” Tsering has accepted a position as medical officer at the Tibetan Delek Hospital.

Abbie Pierce, “*Time Efficiency Studies in a Point of Dispensing (POD) Exercise: An Evaluation.*”

M.P.H. (Environmental Health)

Jacqueline Mix, “*Public Health Significance of Salmonella and E. Coli 0157:H7: Analysis and Recommendations.*” Jacquie is continuing her studies in the Ph.D. in Epidemiology Program in the Department of SPM.

M.P.H. (Health Services Administration)

Sarah Couch, J.D., “*Legal and Cultural Challenges Encountered by Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence.*”