

# 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>



June 2008

Marcia Wopperer, editor

### *The Director's Corner*

We are pleased to announce Lina Mu, M.D., Ph.D. has joined the department as assistant professor effective June 16. Dr. Mu received her M.D. from Shanxi Medical University in 1995 and her Ph.D. in Epidemiology and Health Statistics from Fudan University in 2002. Dr. Mu was a fellow at the Unit of Descriptive Epidemiology, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Lyon, France from 2002-2003, and an American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Scholar at the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Yale University School of Medicine from 2006-2008. Her research interests focus on the molecular epidemiology of malignancies in China, and environmental exposures in relation to cancer, primarily cancers of the respiratory track. Feel free to stop by her office and welcome her to the department.


Commencement for the School of Public Health and Health Professions was held on May 10 at the Center for the Arts. Twelve M.P.H., three M.S. and six Ph.D. students from the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine were included in the roster of degree conferrals. Congratulations to our graduates and best wishes on their future endeavors!


The School of Public Health and Health Professions continues to make arduous progress assembling the voluminous self-study materials required for accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). We want to thank the students who volunteered to serve on the focused working groups. And for those serving on committees that continue to meet through the summer, we thank you for continuing to participate during the temperate Western New York summers. Your input was, and will continue to be invaluable. We anticipate submitting the self-study document to CEPH during the Fall 2008 semester. A mock site visit conducted by our


outside advisors has been scheduled for October 6-7. The official site visit by CEPH is scheduled for May 4-6, 2009. This should set the stage for achieving certification at the Fall 2009 Board Meeting of CEPH.


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

### *Honors and Awards*

 **Gabrielle Foley**, M.P.H. was awarded a University at Buffalo Gilbert D. Moore Fellowship for the 2008-2009 academic year. Moore Fellowships are awarded to students who simultaneously pursue both a professional and Ph.D. degree.

 **Brian McCarthy**, J.D., M.P.H., was awarded a federal Presidential Management Fellowship from the Office of Personnel Management. The fellowship was created to attract men and women to federal service from a variety of academic disciplines who have a clear interest in and commitment to excellence in leadership and management of public policies and programs. Brian will be working in the Department of Veteran Affairs.

 **Lisa Rafalson**, Ph.D. was selected as a scholarship recipient for the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) Northwestern University Summer Cohort Study Data Workshop to be held July 13-17.

 **Brent Williams**, M.S., was awarded a predoctoral fellowship from the Founders Affiliate Research Committee of the American Heart Association (AHA) for his project entitled "The Incremental Prognostic Value of Myocardial Perfusion Parameters as Measured by Positron Emission Tomography." Of the 104 applications received, only 32 applications were funded.

## *Society for Epidemiologic Research*

The 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) will be held June 24-27 in Chicago, IL. **Ted Brasky**, M.S., will present a paper entitled “*Great Lakes Sport-Caught Fish Consumption and the Incidence of Endometriosis in the Angler Health Follow-Up Study (AHFS)*.” **Nedra Joseph**, Ph.D. will present a poster entitled “*Subclinical Markers of Cardiovascular Disease in Urban Police Officers and a General Population Sample*.”

## *Resident Scholarly Exchange Day*

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Resident Scholarly Exchange Day was held May 1 in UB's Harriman Hall. Research conducted by residents from the University Medical Resident Services were presented providing participants with valuable feedback from faculty researchers and fellow residents. The following posters were presented by General Preventive Medicine residents: **Allen Leavens**, M.D., “*Medical Student Pathways to Research and the Role of Preventive Medicine*,” and **Demetrius Moutsiakis**, M.D., “*Reassessing Physical Disability Among U.S. Medical Students*.”

## *American Public Health Association*

“*Public Health Without Borders*” is the theme for the 136<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA) to be held October 25-29 in San Diego, CA. The meeting will explore transnational public health and will address a diversity of topics including immigrant and refugee health, water and land rights, coordinating disease surveillance and epidemiologic response activities across borders, air and water pollution management across borders, and the international transmission of socio-cultural behaviors with adverse health implications. Register by August 15 for special savings! Information and registration is available online at [www.apha.org/meetings](http://www.apha.org/meetings). SPHHP will sponsor a graduate student recruitment booth. Be sure to drop by if you are attending the meeting.

## *Faculty/Student Research*

**Maansi Bansal-Travers**, Ph.D., received a \$162,750 two-year Young Clinical Scientist Award for her grant entitled “*Evaluating the Characteristics that Influence Persuasiveness of Secondhand Smoke Advertisements*” from the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute. She was also awarded a one-year \$23,500 grant from the Roswell Park Cancer Institute Transdisciplinary Tobacco

Use Research Center (TTURC) Developmental Research Program entitled “*Pilot Study to Evaluate the Influence of Cigarette Pack Design on U.S. Adults*.”

**John Violanti**, Ph.D., was awarded a one-year, \$30,000 grant entitled “*Assessing Implicit Associations and Behavior in Police Officers*” from The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Current methods for evaluating mental health behavior rely heavily on self-reports, which often provide biased or limited information. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) uses an individual's automatic cognitive reaction rather than self-reports to examine self-thoughts, thus providing a more accurate picture of ideas about mental health. This measure is especially useful for police officers, who tend to deny mental health problems more than other populations.

## *Faculty/Student Presentations*

**Maansi Bansal-Travers**, Ph.D., presented a poster entitled “*Evaluation of Novel Tobacco Product Advertisements Using Eye-Tracking Technology*” at the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco meeting held in Portland, OR, February 27-March 1.

**Gabrielle Foley**, M.P.H., presented a paper entitled “*New York Wellness Works (NYWW): The Expansion of State-Wide Policies Supporting Worksite Health Promotion Interventions Based on the Successes of a Regional Partnership*” at the Active Living Research Conference held April 9-12 in Washington, DC.

**Gary Giovino**, Ph.D., was an invited presenter at the Craig Ryder Memorial Lecture sponsored by the New York State Department of Health Tobacco Control Program 2008 Statewide Meeting held in Albany, NY on May 8. The title of his presentation was “*Ending the Tobacco Problem by 2030 – Implementing the Institute of Medicine's Blueprint*.”

**Michael LaMonte**, Ph.D., was a keynote speaker at the Australian Association Exercise Science and Rehabilitation meeting held in Melbourne, Australia, March 27-30. The title of his presentation was “*Functional Capacity in Cardiovascular Disease Management*.”

**Heather Ochs-Balcom**, Ph.D., presented a poster entitled “*Association of Vitamin D Receptor Gene Variants, Adiposity and Colon Cancer*” at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting. The meeting was held April 12-17 in San Diego, CA.

**Mary Platek**, Ph.D., will present a poster entitled “*Genetic Variation in One Carbon Metabolism Enzymes and Risk of Breast Cancer: The Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study*” at the Department of Defense, Breast Cancer Research Program Era of Hope Meeting to be held June 25-28 in Baltimore, MD.

**Lisa Rafalson**, Ph.D., presented the following posters at the American Heart Association's 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention in association with the Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Metabolism held in Colorado Springs, March 13-15: "Lifetime Total Pack-Years of Cigarette Smoking is Associated with Conversion from Normoglycemia to Pre-Diabetes: The Western New York Health Study," and "Inflammatory Markers Do Not Independently Predict Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in The Western New York Health Study." Dr. Rafalson also presented a poster entitled "Population-Based Incidence Rates and Risk Factors for Pre-Diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in Western New Yorkers: The Western New York Health Study" at the American Diabetes Association's 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Sessions held June 6-10 in San Francisco, CA.

**John Violanti**, Ph.D., served as a panel discussant on peer support for first responders "The NYPD Experience" at the New York University Center on Violence and Recovery, New York University School of Law held on April 6.

**Menghua Tao**, Ph.D., was selected to present an oral and poster presentation for her abstract entitled "Alcohol Consumption and DNA Hypermethylation in Breast Cancer: The Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study" at the Department of Defense, Breast Cancer Research Program Era of Hope Meeting. The meeting will be held June 25-28 in Baltimore, MD.

## *News and Notes*

**Demetrius Moutsiakis**, M.D., has begun a two-month rotation at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at Rockville, MD.

**Brent Williams**, M.S., successfully passed his May 2008 preliminary exam. Congratulations!

## *Alumni Update*

**Linda Duffy**, Ph.D., M.S. ('85) has accepted a position as program officer, Division of Extramural Research at the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, National Institutes of Health.

**Ranjan Chanda**, M.B.B.S., M.P.H. ('05) will begin his two year nephrology fellowship at Baylor University Medical Center, Dallas, TX on July 1.

**Geroncio Fajardo**, M.D., M.B.A., M.S., M.S. ('04) is currently a research scientist III at the Genetic Disease Screening Program, California Department of Public Health.

**Abbi Pierce**, M.P.H. ('08) has accepted a position as immunization surveillance coordinator at the Division of Disease Control, North Dakota Department of Health.

**Amy Sonricker**, M.P.H. ('06) was recently appointed zoonotic/vectorborne epidemiologist in the Infectious Disease Program, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

## *Preventive Medicine Residency Program*

Drs. **Christopher Co** and **Deirdre Wheat** will begin their PGY III in the Combined Internal Medicine/Preventive Medicine Residency Program on June 30. They began their residency in Internal Medicine in 2006. Dr. Co received his M.D. from the University of the Philippines in 2003. Dr. Wheat received her MB.Bch. from the National University of Ireland, Galway in 1993. Dr. Wheat has been appointed to the Cancer Track of the General Preventive Medicine Residency Program.

**Allen Leavens**, M.D. will complete his PGY III in General Preventive Medicine on June 25.

## *June 2008 Graduates*

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

### *Ph.D. Epidemiology and Community Health*

**Parveen Nedra Joseph**, M.S., "Structural and Functional Markers of Subclinical Cardiovascular Disease in Urban Police Officers and a General Population Sample." Committee members include Drs. Joan Dorn (major), John Violanti, Richard Donahue and Michael Andrew. Nedra is currently an epidemiologist at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at CDC.

**Mary Platek**, M.S., "Alcohol Consumption and Risk of Breast Cancer: An Epidemiologic Investigation of Possible Mechanisms." Committee members include Drs. Jo Freudenheim (major), Matthew Bonner and Susan McCann. Mary is a postdoctoral research affiliate at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

**Mark Travers**, M.S., "Smoke-Free Air Policy: Changing What is in the Air and in the Body." Committee members include Drs. Andrew Hyland (major), K. Michael Cummings and Gary Giovino. Mark is a research scientist in the Department of Health Behavior, Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

### M.S. Epidemiology

**Renee Walker**, “*Barriers to Mammography Completion and Physician Referral Patterns Among Urban Inner-City Women in Primary Care Practice.*” Committee members include Drs. Jean Wactawski-Wende (major), Laurene Tumiel-Berhalter and Margaret Eberl.

### M.P.H. (Epidemiology)

**Shalaka Hampras**, M.B.B.S., “*Asian Indian Immigrants’ Health Behavior and Social Support.*” Committee members include: Drs. Pavani Ram (major) and Carl Li. Shalaka is continuing her studies in the Ph.D. in Epidemiology Program in the Department of SPM.

**Allen Leavens**, M.D., “*Use of Medical Claims Data to Assess Utilization of Primary Care Services in Patients with a Diagnosis of Breast Cancer.*” Committee members include: Drs. Carl Li (major) and Stephen Edge.

**Carleen Pope**, “*Relationship of Serum PCB Levels to Thyroid Function and Hearing Loss.*” Committee members include: Drs. Matthew Bonner (major) and Carl Li. Carleen is a chief microbiology laboratory technician at the Erie County Public Health Laboratory.

**Denise Rokitka**, M.D., “*Secondary Malignant Neoplasms Among Children and Adolescents Following Treatment for Hodgkin’s Disease.*” Committee members include: Drs. Martin Mahoney (major) and Dennis Bertram. Denise is an attending physician at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

### M.P.H. (Environmental Health)

**Jacqueline Mix**, “*Public Health Significance of Salmonella and E. Coli 0157:H7: Analysis and Recommendations.*” Committee members include: Drs. William Scheider (major) and Carl Li. Jacque is continuing her studies in the Ph.D. in Epidemiology Program in the Department of SPM.

### M.P.H. (Health Services Administration)

**David Brooks**, “*Best Practices in Making Restaurant Health Inspections Public.*” Committee members include: Drs. Dennis Bertram (major) and Carl Li. David is a resident physician in rehabilitation medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Cheryl Kennedy**, “*Hepatitis A: A Case Study in Erie County.*” Committee members include: Drs. Donald Rowe (major) and Dennis Bertram.

**Shauna Lawless**, M.D., “*Cancer Risk Behaviors in Buffalo Urban Adolescents.*” Committee members include: Drs. Martin Mahoney (major) and Carl Li. Shauna will complete her PGY III in the General Preventive Medicine Residency Program in August 2008

**Brian McCarthy**, J.D., “*Preparing a Multi-Jurisdictional Response to Public Health Threats.*” Committee members include: Drs. Donald Rowe (major) and Dennis Bertram. Brian is currently a Presidential Management Fellow at the Department of Veteran Affairs.

## *Course Announcements*

After a hiatus, the following courses will once again be offered by the Department of SPM in Fall 2008:

### **SPM 551 Epidemiologic Applications to Environmental Epidemiology**

Reg. No. 473512

Mondays 1:00-3:40 p.m.

Instructor: Matthew Bonner, Ph.D.

This course will provide epidemiology and environmental health students a working knowledge of epidemiologic theory and practice applied to issues of environmental health. Cases studies and specific environmental issues will be used to illustrate the application of epidemiologic theory to understand the role of environmental factors in the etiology of disease.

Prerequisites: SPM 501, SPM 502, STA 527

### **SPM 618 Perinatal Epidemiology**

Reg. No. 487369

Thursdays 9:00-11:40 a.m.

Instructor: Carole Rudra, Ph.D.

The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with the current field of perinatal epidemiology and to increase their understanding of various perinatal events in human populations. This course is also intended to introduce students to methodological complexities particularly relevant to the field. Topics will include terminology and methods; early pregnancy losses; measures of fetal growth and development; metabolic disorders of pregnancy; birth defects; and perinatal and infant morbidity and mortality.

Prerequisites: SPM 501, STA 527

For those thinking ahead to Spring 2009, a new one week, one credit special topics course will be offered:

### **SPM 522 Special Topics: Genetic and Genomic Epidemiology of Complex Disease (1 credit)**

January 12-16, 2009, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Instructor: Heather Ochs-Balcom, Ph.D.

This course is an introduction to the field of genetic and genomic epidemiology including the investigation of how variation in the human genome influences complex disease phenotypes. The course will cover segregation, linkage, and association analysis as they are used in family- and population-based studies to search for disease-causing genes.

Prerequisite: None