

# 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>



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Marcia Wopperer, editor

### *The Director's Corner*


We continue to make progress toward accreditation of the School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP). We recently had two consultants visit the School to meet with many of the faculty and administrators. We are now working to incorporate their recommendations. We will submit the self-study document to Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) by December 4, 2008. The CEPH site visit is scheduled for May 5-6, 2009 with the accrediting organization making a decision on our application in August 2009. I want to thank the students who have served on the innumerable committees for their input into the self-study document and the process of accreditation. Your input has been and will continue to be invaluable.


The Department has enrolled its first student into the new Ph.D. in Community Health Program. We would like to welcome all 25 new students for the Fall 2008 semester: five Ph.D. students in Epidemiology, one Ph.D. student in Community Health, nine M.S. and 10 M.P.H. students. We wish you success in your studies!


**Ruqaijah Yearby**, J.D., M.P.H., recently joined the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine and the UB Law School as Director of the JD/MPH Program. Ruqaijah received her J.D. from Georgetown University, and her M.P.H. from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. She was a former assistant regional counsel at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Chicago, and an assistant professor at the Loyola University School of Law. Her areas of interest include administrative law, bioethics, health care law, law and science, and law and medicine.

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

### *Honors and Awards*

 **Vijay Jayaprakash**, M.B.B.S., has been selected for the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) *Scholar-in-Training Award*. The highly competitive award will provide financial support for attendance at the AACR 2008 International Conference on Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research held November 16-19 in Washington DC.

 **Kelly Kamm**, M.H.S., was awarded a Presidential/Woodburn Fellowship from the University at Buffalo. The goal of the fellowship, which includes a partial stipend with tuition scholarship, is to recruit outstanding graduate students to the University.

 **Kristina Young**, M.S., ('85) was named this year's Erie County *Woman of Distinction*. In addition to her roles in teaching and consulting she has served as an administrator at the Erie County Health Department, as executive director of Planned Parenthood of Buffalo and Erie County, as executive director of the Millard Fillmore Hospital's Health Education and Research Foundation, and as Millard Fillmore's vice president for research and development. In 2006 she became part-time executive director of the WNY Public Health Alliance, Inc. The Alliance is composed of health commissioners and other representatives of the departments of public health to coordinate the agencies that would be called into service in the event of any catastrophe. She is also co-author of a textbook entitled *Healthcare USA, Understanding Its Organization and Delivery*.

## *Faculty/Student Research*

**Brian King**, M.P.H., was awarded a one-year, \$37,600 grant entitled *"Intervention for Enhanced Adoption of Smoke-Free Apartment Building Policies"* from the Centers for Disease Control. The study will assess real-time secondhand smoke transfer within residential multi-unit buildings and evaluate the effectiveness of an educational-based intervention to increase awareness and support for smoke-free policies among multi-unit building owners and managers.

**Susan McCann**, Ph.D., is principal investigator for a two-year \$181,693 grant entitled *"Dietary Lignan Effects on Hormone, Growth, and Signaling Factors in Breast Tumors"* from the National Cancer Institute. Lignans are plant compounds that can act as hormones or restrict cancer growth through other mechanisms. The proposed study will investigate the association of dietary lignan intakes, as amounts commonly consumed in usual diets, with several hormone and growth-related tumor characteristics, many of which are related to breast cancer prognosis. The results of this study may provide important information which can be useful in understanding the effect of diet on development of different breast cancer subtypes.

**Kirsten Moysich**, Ph.D., received a one-year \$69,984 grant entitled *"Targeting the Immunological Micro-environment in Multiple Myeloma"* from the Roswell Park Cancer Institute Alliance Foundation. The goal of the project is to determine the significance of regulatory T cells in the etiology of multiple myeloma.

**James Olson**, Ph.D., is leading research studies on exposure to pesticides, the potential for adverse effects associated with exposures in certain populations and genetic susceptibility to the pesticides. **Matthew Bonner**, Ph.D., is a co-investigator. The studies are funded by \$1.5 million in new grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). The three-year EPA grant focuses on the activation and detoxification of organophosphate pesticides (OPs), the most commonly used pesticides in the U.S. and worldwide. OPs can stop the action of acetylcholinesterase, an enzyme essential to nerve function in humans, animals and insects. UB is collaborating with Oregon Health and Sciences University, the University of Washington and Egypt's Menoufia University on the four-year NIEHS grant. The researchers will assess exposures to OP pesticides in 255 Egyptian cotton field workers and determine if there are neurotoxic effects. These studies will provide data necessary to develop biomarkers of OP exposure, biologic response and genetic susceptibility.

**Pavani Ram**, M.D., is principal investigator for a one-year \$15,000 grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention. The grant will assess determinants and barriers to utilization of oral rehydration therapy and continued feeding for children with diarrhea among caretakers, medical providers, and pharmacists in rural and urban Kenya.

**John Violanti**, Ph.D., was awarded a one-year \$69,390 grant from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health/Centers for Disease Control entitled *"Atypical Work Hours and Cancer Incidence."* Although previous work suggests that atypical work hours may contribute to carcinogenesis, and that police officers may be at increased risk, factors which may contribute to such risk are not well documented in this occupation. The objective of the study is to examine the impact of the atypical work hours on cancer incidence in police officers.

## *American Public Health Association*

The Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association will be held October 25-29 in San Diego, CA. **Gabrielle Foley**, M.P.H., will serve as a session moderator and oral presenter at the meeting. Her presentation is entitled *"Western New York Wellness Works Regional Resource Center (WYNWW-RRC): Measuring and Evaluating the Health of Rural, Minority and Underserved Worksites in Western New York."* **Demetrius Moutsiakis**, M.D., M.P.H., will also present a poster entitled *"Re-assessing the Prevalence of Physical Disability Among U.S. Medical Students."* The School of Public Health and Health Professions will have a graduate student recruitment booth at the meeting. Please drop by if you are attending APHA and be sure to bring any prospective students with you.

## *Faculty/Student Presentations*

**Jo Freudenheim**, Ph.D., is an invited speaker at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Institute in Seattle, WA on November 20. She will present a talk entitled *"What Can We Learn From the Association of Alcohol and Breast Cancer?"*

**Vijay Jayaprakash**, M.B.B.S., presented a paper entitled *"Auto-fluorescence Screening for Oral Pre-Malignant and Malignant Lesions"* at the American Head and Neck Society (AHNS) Seventh International Conference on Head and Neck Cancer, held July 19-23 in San Francisco, CA.

**Pavani Ram**, M.D., recently traveled to Kenya to present the results of a study she is conducting in collaboration with colleagues from the Kenya Medical Research Institute/ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Ministry of Health. The project assesses factors

associated with appropriate diarrhea case management at the community level in two areas of Kenya: Kibera, one of Africa's largest urban slums, and Asembo, an impoverished rural area in western Kenya. Diarrhea is the third leading cause of death in children under five years of age in Kenya, and the second leading cause of death in children under five years of age worldwide.

## *News and Notes*

The Department of SPM awarded graduate assistantships to **Raj Chennamaneni**, **Daniela Geba**, **Joseph Green**, **Shalaka Hampras**, **Kelly Kamm**, **Yanli Li** and **Jacqueline Mix** for the 2008-09 academic year.

**John Heberger**, **Alex Johnson** and **Shelly Tsai** were appointed Occupational Safety and Health (OS&H) Trainee Fellows. The goal of the training program, funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), is to increase the pool of highly qualified OS&H professionals in WNY.

**Margaret DiVita**, M.S., successfully passed her August 2008 preliminary exam. Congratulations!

The National Cancer Institute's Epidemiology and Genetics Research Program (EGRP) *Research Highlights* will showcase a manuscript by **Sylvia Quick**, Ph.D., entitled "*Effect Modification by Catalase Genotype Suggests a Role for Oxidative Stress in the Association of Hormone Replacement Therapy with Postmenopausal Breast Cancer.*" EGRP's *Research Highlights* features research funded by the program which merits important scientific contribution. Her manuscript was recently published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers, and Prevention*.

## *SPM Graduate Student Association*

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) of the Department of SPM recently elected new officers for the 2008-2009 academic year: **Brian King** (president); **Katharine Dobson** (vice president); **Andrea Licht** (treasurer); **Leah Lasher** (secretary). **Marina Skrombolas** and **Katharine Dobson** will serve as alternate senators. **John Heberger** was elected treasurer of the University's Graduate Student Association.

## *Alumni Update*

**Jill Murphy**, Ph.D. ('03) has been promoted to associate professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health at Upstate Medical University.

## *September 2008 Graduates*

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

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

**Tammy Austin-Ketch**, M.S., "*Buffalo Cardio-Metabolic Occupational Police Stress Study: An Exploratory Analysis of Post-traumatic Stress, Depression, Metabolic Syndrome and Salivary Cortisol.*" Committee members include Drs. John Violanti (major), Carl Li, John Vena, Michael Andrew. Tammy is a clinical associate professor at the University at Buffalo School of Nursing.

**Sylvia Quick**, M.A., "*Oxidative Stress, Genetic Polymorphisms and Breast Cancer Risk.*" Committee members include Drs. Jo Freudenheim (major), Christine Ambrosone and Alan Hutson. Sylvia is a visiting assistant professor at SUNY Cortland.

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

**Rajprakash Chennamaneni**, M.B.B.S., "*Polychlorinated Biphenyl Exposures in Anniston, Alabama.*" Committee members include Drs. Matthew Bonner (major) and Carl Li. Raj is continuing his studies in the Ph.D. in Epidemiology Program in the Department of SPM.

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

**Anne Passalugo**, "*Pandemic Influenza Plan for the Erie County Correctional Facility and Holding Center.*" Committee members include Drs. Donald Rowe (major) and Dennis Bertram.

## *New Students*

The Department of SPM welcomes the following new students for Fall 2008.

### *Ph.D. Epidemiology*

**Rajprakash Chennamaneni**, M.B.B.S., University of Health Sciences, India; M.P.H., University at Buffalo.

**Joseph Green**, B.A. biology, M.A. geography, University of South Florida.

**Shalaka Hampras**, M.B.B.S., Padmashree Dr. D.Y. Patil Medical College, India; M.P.H., University at Buffalo.

**Yanli Li**, B. of Med, Peking University Health Science Center.

**Gary Zirpoli**, B.S. mathematics, SUNY Albany; M.A. statistics, University at Buffalo. Gary is a research assistant in the Department of Cancer Prevention and Control, Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

*Ph.D. Community Health*

**Kelly Kamm**, B.S. microbiology, Washington State University; M.H.S., Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

*M.S. Epidemiology*

**John Heberger**, B.A. economics, St. John Fisher College; M.A. health economics, University at Buffalo.

**Melissa Kluczynski**, B.S. psychology, University at Buffalo.

**Andrea Licht**, B.S. health science, SUNY College at Cortland.

**Sarah Morrow**, M.D., University of Calgary. Sarah is a research assistant professor in the Department of Neurology, University at Buffalo.

**Eric Spence**, B.S. statistics, Michigan State University.

**James Stringer**, B.A. and M.A. anthropology, University at Buffalo.

**Annalynn Surace**, B.A. biology, University of Rochester.

**Anne Weaver**, B.S. biology, SUNY College at Geneseo.

**Kimberly Wilkins**, B.S. biology, Spanish, University of Virginia. Kimberly is a research affiliate in the Department of Cancer Prevention and Control at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

*M.P.H. (Epidemiology)*

**Christopher Co**, M.D., University of the Philippines. Christopher is a PGY III resident in the Combined Internal Medicine/Preventive Medicine Residency Program.

**Lindsay Heckler**, B.S. microbiology, University of Rochester. Lindsay is currently a law student at the University at Buffalo.

**Amanda Rundell**, B.A. anthropology, University at Buffalo.

**Monica Thakur**, M.B.B.S., Government Medical College, India.

**Deirdre Wheat**, M.B.B.Ch.BAO, National University of Ireland, Galway. Deirdre is a PGY III resident in the Combined Internal Medicine/Preventive Medicine Residency Program.

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

**Alex Johnson**, B.S. biomedical sciences, University at Buffalo. Alex is a University at Buffalo Occupational Safety and Health Fellow.

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

**Kathleen Dolan**, B.A. English/art history, College of the Holy Cross. Kathleen is a law student at the University at Buffalo.

**Shannon Pelow**, B.S. natural sciences, Daemen College.

**Anushree Sharma**, B.S. biology, University of Texas-Arlington.

**Shelly Tsai**, J.D., University at Buffalo. Shelly is a University at Buffalo Occupational Safety and Health Fellow.

## *Course Announcements*

The following new course is awaiting approval from the Graduate School. It will be offered as a selected topics in the Spring 2009 semester.

### **SPM 522 Selected Topics: Epidemiology of Type 2 Diabetes & Related Conditions (3 credits)**

Reg.No. 020902

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

Instructor: Richard Donahue, Ph.D.

The course will provide students with a description of the epidemiological characteristics of type 2 diabetes mellitus and its major complications (coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, lower extremity arterial disease). Emphasis will be placed on the epidemiology of major risk factors for type 2 as well as novel risk factors including c-reactive protein, PAI-1 and other new biomarkers.