

SPM NEWS

Department of Social & Preventive Medicine

School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP)

University at Buffalo

<http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/social-and-preventive-medicine>



February 2014

Marcia Wopperer, editor

The Chair's Corner

Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends:

This is my first Chair's Corner message and I would be remiss if I didn't start by expressing the honor and excitement I feel being appointed chair of our department. The department has a long distinguished history of scholarship and teaching which began in 1967. I am very pleased to help steer the department in the next part of its journey. In my short tenure so far it is clear to me the dedication of our faculty and staff and the great potential of our department. I want to thank everyone for their contributions and look forward to working with you all in the future.

The upcoming changes in our department bring opportunities for all of us. I am pleased to report that everyone in the department is embracing and contributing to these changes. Following are some highlights:

First, our department will have a new name, "**Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health**". We will begin formally using the new name on April 1st. This name better identifies our role in public health and will help to frame our mission for our faculty, colleagues, students, and the public health community locally, nationally and internationally. Dr. Jean Wactawski-Wende has been leading a department working group since last December to work on the related complex issues.

Second, since I arrived last November, our department has been conducting an introspective review of our education and research programs and will develop short- and long-term strategic plans. We held a very successful Education Retreat on January 23, and will hold a Research Retreat on March 17. These efforts will help shape our department's future. I want to thank Drs. Amy Millen, Jerry Yates, Matthew Bonner and other colleagues for their leadership and hard work in organizing these retreats.

Third, we are developing department bylaws and refining department operations. Special thanks to Kristina Young and Richard Harding for their leadership and contributions.

Fourth, Drs. Amy Millen and Lina Mu were promoted to associate professor with tenure last fall. Let's congratulate them! Dr. William Scheider retired in January after many years of excellent service to our department and school. He will be missed.

Fifth, the department will grow rapidly. We are recruiting five new faculty. These include a joint search with the Department of Biostatistics for a tenure track assistant professor. Dr. Jo Freudenheim is co-chairing the joint search committee. We also have a search for one health services clinical faculty position, and a third search for three tenure track assistant or associate professors in epidemiology and environmental health. Dr. Jean Wactawski-Wende chairs the search committee. Please help encourage strong candidates to apply and let us know if you have strong candidates to recommend.

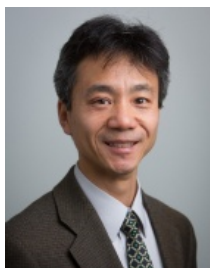
Finally, with strong support from our school and university leadership, our department is helping develop a new UB Summer Institute on Public Health to offer exciting training programs to a worldwide audience. We aim to launch the program in summer 2015. The Institute will help bring many new opportunities to UB.

Many faculty and staff members have been contributing to these changes and initiatives, and it's a special joy working with them. I hope you are all as excited as I am about the department and the direction we are heading. I am looking forward to the great things that we as faculty, staff, students and alumni will accomplish together!

- Youfa Wang, MD, PhD

Support the Department's educational mission. Credit card donations can be made online at www.giving.buffalo.edu. Select the "Use My Gift For" box to indicate how you want your donation used for our department.

Department Welcomes New Chair



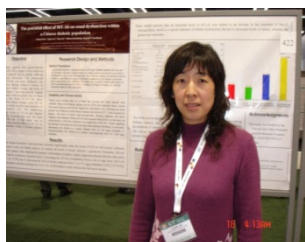
We wish to extend a warm welcome to Youfa Wang, MD, PhD. Dr. Wang joined the department in November 2013 as professor and chair. He holds an MD from Beijing Medical University, an MS in epidemiology from the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences & Peking Union Medical College, and a PhD in nutritional epidemiology from the

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Prior to joining UB he was an associate professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and School of Medicine. Dr. Wang is the founding director of the Johns Hopkins Global Center on Childhood Obesity funded through a \$16.1 million NIH U54 center grant. He is also adjunct professor in Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, the Peking University School of Public Health, Xi'an Jiaotong University School of Medicine, and Fudan University School of Public Health. Dr. Wang's research interests focus on nutritional epidemiology, child nutrition and growth, childhood obesity, chronic diseases, health disparities, lifestyles, global health, analysis of national survey and longitudinal data, and application of systems science-based methodologies in public health research.

We also wish to thank **Jerry Yates**, MD, MPH, who has served as interim chair from July 1 to October 31. Jerry is continuing to assist the department in the transition to its new leadership.

Department Welcomes New Faculty

The department would like to welcome faculty who have recently joined SPM.



Lijian Lei, PhD, joined the department in August 2013 as a visiting research scholar. Dr. Lei is currently an associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology, Shanxi Medical University. She received a BS in preventive medicine and a

MS in occupational health from Shanxi Medical University, and a PhD in occupational health and environmental health from Fudan University. Her research interests focus on occupational epidemiology in metal exposure, in particular renal dysfunction caused by cadmium or lead exposure. She is working with Dr. Lina Mu.



Shiyong Liu, PhD, joined the department as a visiting research scholar in December 2013. He is currently an associate professor at the Research Institute of Economics and Management at

the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics. He received a BEng (engineering) from Northeast Petroleum University, a MA in management science and engineering from Guangdong University of Technology, and a PhD in industrial and systems engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Dr. Liu's major interests include policy evaluation, modeling of enterprise management systems, and systems engineering. He is working with Dr. Youfa Wang.



Bing Su, PhD, was appointed research assistant professor, effective May 2013. He received his MD from Henan Medical University and his PhD in medical sciences from Shanghai Medical College Fudan University. Bing is working with Dr. Xuefeng Ren.



Hong Xue, PhD, joined the department as research assistant professor in January 2014. Prior to joining UB, Hong served as project manager and researcher at the Johns Hopkins Global Center on Childhood Obesity. His primary research interests include economic and systems modeling of obesity, non-communicable chronic

diseases epidemiology, quantitative methods in health data analysis, and global health. Hong received a BS in economics from Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, a MS in economics from the North Carolina A&T State University, a PhD in economics from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and is currently a PhD candidate in human nutrition from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He is working with Dr. Youfa Wang.

Fond Farewell

William Scheider, PhD, retired from the Department on January 1. Bill has made many important contributions to the department and school from 2004-2013. In addition to teaching, he chaired and served on several department and school committees. He also served as director of the MPH Environmental Health Concentration. Bill's recent awards included the 2012 Clean Air Coalition Gold Gas Mask Award for outstanding community service, the 2012 SPHP Dean's Community Service Award, and the 2013

SPHHP Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award. Prior to joining SPM in 2004, he taught nutrition education at Buffalo State College for 25 years. In retirement Bill intends to continue his work with grass root community organizations to reduce air pollution and improve the health of communities in WNY, as well as pursue his interests in writing and photography. Bill will remain an adjunct faculty member in the department. The department extends deep appreciation to Bill for his service and dedication to graduate education.

Support the New EEH Student Excellent Award

The department will create a new Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health (EEH) *Student Excellence Award*, which will be awarded annually to EEH students who demonstrate excellence in their work as a graduate student. The award winners will be announced at the SPHHP Annual J. Warren Perry Lecture during the fall semester. We would like to request faculty, staff, and alumni make a donation to support the new award. Please contact Mary Glenn at glenn@buffalo.edu to donate.

Saxon Graham Lecture on April 4

Mark your calendars! The 2014 Saxon Graham Lecture will be held on Friday, April 4 from 12:00-1:00 pm in 144 Farber Hall. Light refreshments will be served at 11:30. JoAnn Manson, MD, DrPH, chief of the Division of Preventive Medicine, and co-director of the Connors Center for Women's Health and Gender Biology at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School is the invited speaker. Her talk is entitled "*Vitamin D and Prevention of Cancer and Cardiovascular Disease: Is Enthusiasm Outpacing Evidence?*" The annual lecture honors Dr. Saxon Graham, who chaired the Department from 1981-1991.

Research & Grants

Jo Freudenheim, PhD, received a one-year, \$25,000 Developmental Research Program Award as part of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute – University of Pittsburgh Ovarian Cancer Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE). The project entitled "*Infection in the Etiology of Ovarian Cancer*" will examine the hypothesis that there is a microbial etiology to ovarian cancer, examining both history of genital infectious in relation to risk and also analyzing ovarian tumors for the presence of bacterial or viral infections.

James Olson, PhD, received a National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) grant entitled "*Assessing Vulnerability of the Adolescent Brain to*

Organophosphorus Pesticides." This is a second award which builds on prior research conducted from 2009-2012. The study will examine the dose-related response of the adolescent brain to organophosphorus pesticides and determine if repeated exposures produce a progressive deficit, and also if this deficit is reversible. **Matthew Bonner**, PhD is a co-investigator.

Xuefeng Ren, PhD, received a two-year grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). The study, "*Human N6AMT1 and Its Regulation of Arsenic Biomethylation and Toxicity*," will characterize and compare the kinetic parameters for arsenic biomethylation by N6AMT1 and AS3MT and investigate their interactive effects on arsenic metabolism and the resulting toxicological responses to arsenic.

John Violanti, PhD's recent study entitled "*Shift Work and Long-Term Injury Among Police Officers*" found night shift work poses a more significant threat to the life and health of police officers than previously thought. Urban night shift police officers are three times more likely than day shift, and 2.2 times more likely than afternoon shift workers to suffer long-term on-the-job injuries resulting in leaves of more than 90 days. Possible explanations for the higher injury rate in night shift workers include sleep disturbance and fatigue-related impairment affecting decision-making in high risk situations, and more frequent and hazardous calls resulting in more serious injuries. His work was published in the Scandinavian Journal of Work and Environmental Health (http://www.sjweh.fi/show_abstract.php?abstract_id=3342)

Youfa Wang, MD, PhD, transferred two NIH grants from Johns Hopkins University to UB: his NIH R01 and part of the U54 Center grant related to childhood obesity and systems science research. One is a China nationwide study and the other is a US nationwide study. His team is conducting a US-China comparison study based on the two projects.

1) The \$1.6 million NIH R01 project, "*Causes and Interventions for Childhood Obesity: Innovative Systems Analysis*," uses integrated conceptual framework, innovative statistical analysis approaches, and rich data from multiple sources to study how complex factors may affect childhood obesity and test potential intervention options in the US.

2) The NIH U54 grant is a part of a \$16 million NIH center grant awarded in 2011. The U54 portion at UB, "*Multilevel Systems-Oriented Childhood Obesity Study In China*," one of the three key research projects in the grant, uses a systems-oriented conceptual framework, longitudinal data collected in China, and novel systems analysis to study changes on individual children and their families' decisions regarding eating, physical activity, and adiposity outcomes. The study findings will have many important policy implications for the U.S. and other countries.

Faculty/Student Presentations

Erin Campbell, MD, presented a poster entitled “*The Cooking for Health Initiative: An Interdisciplinary Pilot Program, 2013*” at the Preventive Medicine 2014 meeting held in New Orleans, LA on February 20.

Lina Mu, MD, PhD, attended two meetings in Brazil as a representative of UB’s WHO Collaborating Center: “Sustainable Development and Environmental Health,” organized through the Pan American Health Organization, and the “Inter-American Network on Health and Housing (INHH),” where she presented her research on indoor and outdoor pollution and their impact on health and housing.

Heather Ochs-Balcom, PhD, presented two posters at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR): The Science of Cancer Health Disparities Annual Meeting which was held in Atlanta, GA, December 7, 2013: “*Do Adipokines Mediate the Association Between Adiposity and Adenomatous Polyps,*” and “*Recruitment of African American Breast Cancer Pedigrees for the Jewels in our Genes Study: Recruitment Outcomes and Sample Characteristics.*”

Youfa Wang, MD, PhD, is an invited panelist and will speak about the non-communicable chronic diseases burden in China at the March 6 HEALTHCARE Symposium on “*The Evolution of China’s Healthcare Industry – Opportunities and Challenges*” sponsored by the SUNY Global Center to be held in NYC. He will also present a seminar entitled “*Fighting the Global Epidemic of Obesity and Chronic Diseases – A Systems Science Approach*” at the Columbia University School of Public Health on March 7.

News and Notes

Drs. **Imran Ahmad, Rashmi Bismark, Tyler Evans** and **Bi Tadzong** passed their American Board of Preventive Medicine exam held in November 2013.

Jo Freudenheim, PhD, was elected president of the Molecular Epidemiology Group (MEG) of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR).

Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD, was named the new Steering Committee Chair for the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) effective October 2013. She will oversee the conduct of the national study which includes investigators from 40 clinical centers and over 160,000 women enrolled from across the US. She has been an active investigator in WHI for more than 20 years, and serves as PI of the Northeast Regional Center, PI of the Buffalo Clinical Center and past chair of the WHI Publications Committee.

Weidong Qu, MD, PhD, associate dean for Science and Research, and professor of Environmental Health at Fudan University School of Public Health, visited UB on January 27-30 to meet with Dr. Youfa Wang’s research team, SPM faculty, and SPHP leadership including the dean, associate deans, department chairs and UB vice provost of International Education to discuss future collaboration in research and training.

Alumni News

Carlos Robert Jaen, MD, PhD (’88), is among 70 new members elected to the Institute of Medicine (IOM). Election to the IOM is one of the highest honors in the field of health and medicine. Dr. Jaen is currently a professor and chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. His research on improving patient-centered care and community health and has drawn international recognition.

Congratulations to Our Graduates

The following students successfully completed all degree requirements established by the Department of SPM and UB for February 1, 2014 degree conferral. Congratulations to our graduates!

PhD Epidemiology

Kelly Kamm – “*Handwashing With Soap to Improve Child Health: Observational and Experimental Studies to Estimate Behavior and Health Effects of Handwashing With Soap in Low Resource Settings.*” Committee members include Drs. Pavani Ram (major), Amy Millen and Jihnee Yu.

MS Epidemiology

Emily Truesdell – “*Food Contributors to Intake of Macronutrients in the Diet of Puerto Rican Women.*” Committee members include Drs. Jo Freudenheim (major), Amy Millen and Susan McCann. Emily has accepted a position as public health sanitarian at the Niagara County Health Department.

MPH Epidemiology

Fiyidi Mikailu – “*Addressing a Public Health Problem: Developing a Questionnaire to Assess Asthma Prevalence on Buffalo’s West Side.*” Committee members include Drs. William Scheider (major) and Carl Li.

MPH Health Services

Stephen Feikls – “*A Public Health Dentistry Approach to Oral and Systemic Health.*” Committee members include Drs. Carl Li (major) and Michael LaMonte.

Kelly Miloski – “*Childhood Obesity Interventions – the Creating a Healthier East End-Riverhead (CHEER) Program.*” Committee members include Dr. Carl Li (major) and Professor Kristina Young.