

# EEH NEWS

## Department of Epidemiology & Environmental Health

School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP)

University at Buffalo, State University of New York (SUNY)

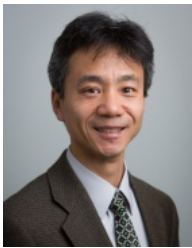
<http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/epidemiology-and-environmental-health>



June 2014

Marcia Wopperer, editor

### The Chair's Corner



Dear EEH Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends:

It is a pleasure to report to you the exciting progress and new initiatives made in the department since our February Newsletter. Our department has been in transition due to our leadership transition, the departmental name change (formally started on April

1<sup>st</sup>, 2014), some new opportunities including multiple searches for new faculty, and other personnel changes. Some of these bring us exciting growth opportunities, while some present challenges. Overall, we've been handling these transitions very well. I have many colleagues to thank for their hard and excellent work! Following are a few highlights:

**EEH Publications:** From June 2013 through May 2014 EEH faculty have published 185 peer-reviewed papers including many in top, high impact journals in public health, epidemiology and related fields. Journals include the American Journal of Epidemiology, American Journal of Public Health, Annals of Epidemiology, Circulation, JAMA, and Pediatrics.

**2014 SPHHP Commencement:** SPHHP commencement was held on Sunday, May 18 at the UB Center for the Arts. Thomas Perez, JD, US Secretary of Labor, served as commencement speaker. The graduates included 18 from EEH: two PhD, five MS, and 11 MPH. Congratulations to our graduates and many thanks to their mentors and committee members!

**Staff Transition:** EEH welcomed Cindy Beverly in early May as temporary secretary to the Chair. She replaced JoMarie Woltz (Secretary to the Chair) who left EEH in April to accept a position in the Office of University Life Services. Marcia Wopperer (Graduate Program Coordinator) will retire in June. They both have provided many years of outstanding service to our department and

UB. They will be missed, and I want to thank them very much! Searches are ongoing for their replacements. Dick Harding has been working hard and coordinating with related school and university offices for these transitions.

**Leadership Transition:** Dr. Lina Mu was appointed Associate Director of the SPHHP Office of Global Health Initiatives in May, joining Dr. Pavani Ram, OGH Director, to help direct the program's future development and enhance the synergy of Global Health and Environmental Health. The school will fund a new full-time staff position to support the program.

**Multiple EEH Faculty Searches:** We have received over 50 applications for the joint position with Department of Biostatistics. We have interviewed multiple candidates and may fill the position very soon. We have received over 70 applications for the department's search for three tenure-track assistant or associate professor positions in EEH and hope to fill at least one position this summer. Please help encourage qualified candidates to apply ASAP.

**Department Strategic Planning, Education and Research Retreats:** EEH has been developing new strategic plans based on the 2012 self-study, guidance from the School and University and faculty's suggestions. We held a full day Education Retreat in January and another full day Research Retreat in March. The retreats have been fruitful; and action plans are developed. Drs. Jerry Yates, Amy Millen and Matthew Bonner have been leading the efforts.

**SPHHP Accreditation:** Our school has submitted the preliminary report, and the formal CEPH site visit will be held in September. A number of EEH faculty and staff have worked hard providing the related information. Especially I want to thank Graduate Program Director, Dr. Carl Li and Graduate Program Coordinator, Marcia Wopperer for their hard work.

There is more exciting news to share, and more colleagues to congratulate and to thank. We do hope to hear from you, to learn and share your good news in the next EEH Fall Newsletter. Enjoy the summer!

- Youfa Wang, MD, PhD

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## Fond Farewell

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It is with mixed emotions I write my last EEH (for many years SPM) Newsletter. Effective June 28, I will be moving on to the next chapter of my life.....retirement.

During my tenure in SPM, I have been a part of its growth and many changes over the years – beginning as a small off-campus department (at 2211 Main Street) with four full-time faculty and 12 graduate students (all part time) enrolled in its one degree program (the MS). I have worked under the direction of six department chairs, five directors of graduate studies and oversaw the degree conferral of 464 graduates. With my departure I take with me not only many fond memories but also cherished friendships with both past and present faculty, staff and students.

I would like to express my gratitude for the kindness and support I have received from so many of you throughout the years. My UB email will remain, so please keep in touch. With warmest regards,

- *Marcia Wopperer*

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## Honors and Awards

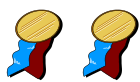
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**Mark Glasgow**, MPH, was awarded a travel fellowship from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) to attend its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Workshop on Metabolomics. The course is jointly sponsored by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) as part of the NIH Common Fund Metabolomics Initiative, and the Departments of Chemistry, and Pharmacology and Toxicology at UAB.



**Yanli Li**, PhD, received the EEH 2013 *Saxon Graham Award* for overall excellence in epidemiology throughout her graduate studies.



**Xiaodan Mai**, MBBS, received the 2014 *Saxon Graham Research Award* for her PhD proposal entitled “*Association Among Periodontal Disease, Oral Microflora, and the Risk of Cancer in Postmenopausal Women.*” Xiaodan also received a Mark Diamond Research Fund Award from the UB Graduate Student Association.



**Wudeneh Mulugeta**, MD, won the First Place Poster Presentation Award at the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Medical Education Scholarly Exchange Day held May 16. The title of his poster was “*Improving Patient*

*Safety When Using Aspirin for Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease.*”



**Michelle Sahli**, MS, received a SPHHP Perry Poster Award for her work entitled “*Associations Between Dietary Intake of Lutein and Diabetic Retinopathy in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study*” at the 2014 SPHHP J. Warren Perry Poster Day held April 25.



**John Violanti**, PhD, received the SPHHP *Outstanding Senior Researcher of the Year Award*. The award is presented to a faculty member whose recent research initiatives demonstrate outstanding importance and relevance to the overall mission of the school.



**Youjin Wang** was elected to *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges* for the 2013-2014 academic year.

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## Research News

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**Martin Mahoney**, MD, PhD, is the PI for a five-year, \$1.5 million contract from the New York State Tobacco Control Program to operate the Western New York Tobacco Health System Change Center. The center, one of eight in the state, will promote tobacco-cessation services in the eight WNY counties. The goal of the program is to increase the number of organizations that can screen patients for tobacco use and provide assistance to help patients quit.



**Pavani Ram**, MD, was awarded a two-year \$15,000 grant, “*Consultancy Synthesis of Perinatal Handwashing Studies,*” from the Save the Children/Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP). The grant will provide technical support to synthesize the findings of several qualitative research studies to describe barriers and facilitators of maternal handwashing behavior during the vulnerable newborn period.



**Xuefeng Ren**, PhD, is the PI for an NIH/NIEHS study, “*Mechanisms and Outcomes of MMA3III Induced Alterations in Histone Acetylation.*” The study will mechanistically define the histone acetylation changes and the resultant aberrant gene expression caused by chronic arsenic exposure, and will provide insight into their association with arsenic carcinogenesis. The funding for the four-year R01 study is \$1,570,338.



**Jean Wactawski-Wende**, PhD, is the PI for a five-year, \$3,986,405 NIH/NIDCR study entitled “*Oral Microbiome and Periodontitis: A Prospective Study in Postmenopausal Women.*” The study will characterize the oral microbiome in a large existing, well-characterized cohort of postmenopausal women. The study will aim to determine the composition and diversity of the subgingival microbiome at three time points over 15 years; determine the extent to which the oral microbiome composition changes over time; and identify which oral microbiome compositions are associated with periodontal disease presence, severity and progression over time. Co-investigators from EEH include Drs. **Amy Millen** and **Michael LaMonte**.

## UB Air Pollution Workshop

Drs. Lina Mu and James Olson are planning to hold an air pollution workshop on September 26, 2014. The workshop will invite pioneers in the field to address cutting edge research in understanding potential adverse health effects of air pollution and approaches to control air pollution and reduce health risk. The workshop will provide a forum for scientists from UB and other institutions and members of the community to exchange ideas, develop future collaborations, and strengthen UB's expertise in the area of air pollution. All faculty and students are welcome to join the workshop. Registration will begin soon. Please contact Dr. Lina Mu at linamu@buffalo.edu for more information.

## News and Notes

**Arthur Michalek**, PhD, was elected to the Health Commission of the Seneca Nation of Indians for a three-year term.

## Alumni News

**Sohaib Aleem**, MBBS, MPH ('11) was appointed Associate Director, QI Center for Primary Care and Population Health at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.

**Jennifer Mace (Rajner)**, MPH ('10), joined the US Navy as Director of Health Care Programs.

## Faculty/Student Presentations

**Catherine Callahan**, MA, presented a poster entitled “*Early Life Exposure to Air Pollution and Promoter*

*Methylation in Breast Tumors in the Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer Study*” at the 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research, held April 5-9 in San Diego, CA.

**Jo Freudenheim**, PhD, gave an invited talk entitled “*Inflammation in an Understanding of Breast Cancer Epidemiology*” in the Department of Epidemiology at Ohio State University, March 2014.

**Kelly Kamm**, PhD, presented a poster entitled “*Is Pregnancy a Teachable Moment for Handwashing Habit Adoption in Primiparous Women in Rural Bangladesh?*” at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) Conference in Vancouver, BC, May 3-4.

**Xiaodan Mai**, MBBS, presented a poster, “*Periodontal Disease Severity and Incident Cancer in Postmenopausal Women: the Buffalo OsteoPerio Study,*” at the 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research held April 5-9 in San Diego, CA. Xiaodan also presented her work at the Sigma Xi Graduate Student Research Day on April 23 at the UB Center for the Arts.

**Albina Minlikeeva**, MD, will present a poster entitled “*Single-Nucleotide Polymorphisms in MnSOD, GSTP1, GSTM1, GPX1, GPX3, and CAT Genes and a Blood Marker of Oxidative Stress: The WEB Study*” at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) to be held June 24-27 in Seattle, WA.

**Heather Ochs-Balcom**, PhD, presented a poster, “*Putative Linkage Signals Identified for Breast Cancer Phenotype in African-American Families,*” at the American Society of Preventive Oncology Annual Meeting held March 8-11 in Arlington, VA.

**Pavani Ram**, MD, presented a poster, “*Bangladesh Perinatal Handwashing Study: A Randomized Controlled Trial to Investigate the Behavioral Effects of Handwashing Promotion in the Perinatal Period,*” at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) Conference, May 3-4 in Vancouver, BC.

**Michelle Sahli**, MS, presented a poster “*Associations Between Dietary Intake of Lutein and Diabetic Retinopathy in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study*” at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Research in Visual Sciences and Ophthalmology held in Orlando, FL, May 4-8. Michelle will also present a poster entitled “*Vitamin D Status and Diabetic Retinopathy in a Biracial Cohort*” at the American Diabetes Association 74<sup>th</sup> Scientific Session, June 13-17 in San Francisco, CA.

**Caila Vaughn**, MPH, presented a poster entitled, “*Sleep Quality and Markers of Breast Cancer Aggressiveness in the Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study*” at the American Society of Preventive Oncology Annual Meeting held in Arlington, VA, March 8-11.

**Jean Wactawski-Wende**, PhD, delivered the 2014 School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Stockton Kimball Lecture entitled “*Studies on Women’s Health.*” The lecture was held on May 29.

**Youfa Wang**, MD, PhD, was invited to serve as a panelist of the Healthcare Symposium “*The Evolution of China’s Healthcare Industry: Opportunities and Challenges*” held on March 6 at the SUNY Global Center in NYC; and presented a seminar, “*Fighting Global Epidemic of Obesity and Chronic Diseases – A Systems Science Approach,*” at Columbia University School of Public Health on March 7. Dr. Wang also chaired the Systems Science and Obesity Symposium entitled “*Applications of Complex Systems Science in Obesity and Non-Communicable Chronic Disease Research*” at the 2014 Experimental Biology (EB) Annual Conference held April 30 in San Diego, CA. He discussed the challenges in obesity and related NCDs research and the opportunities that systems science brings to the field. He gave three presentations at the meeting: “*Achievements and Discoveries: Collaboration Projects Between the US and China Over the Past Three Decades,*” “*Applications of Systems Science in Biomedical Research: The Opportunities, Promise and Challenges,*” and “*Gender Differences in Impact of Food Stores in Neighborhoods on Children’s Obesity Status Change: US Early Childhood Longitudinal Study.*”

**Hong Xue**, PhD, presented a poster, “*When Do Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes Reduce Consumption? – A Dynamic Approach to Understanding Supply-Side Determinants,*” at the International Congress on Obesity (ICO) held March 19 in Malaysia. He also presented a poster entitled “*A Counterfactual Analysis of Changing Economic Content and Its Impact on Dietary Intakes in Chinese Children*” at the 2014 Experimental Biology (EB) Annual Conference held April 30 in San Diego, CA.

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## ***J. Warren Perry Poster Day***

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The 2014 SPHP J. Warren Perry Poster Day was held April 25. The following EEH faculty and students presented their research:

**Catherine Callahan**, MA, “*Early Life Exposure to Air Pollution and Promoter Methylation in Breast Tumors in the Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study*”

**Laurie Grieshaber**, MA, “*Performance of Link Prediction in Evolving Networks and a Facebook Community*”

**Michael Healy**, “*An Evaluation of a Cervical Cancer Screening Program Using Concurrent Visual and Human Papillomavirus Screening in Rural East India*”

**Xiaodan Mai**, MBBS, “*Periodontal Disease Severity and Incident Cancer in Postmenopausal Women: The Buffalo OsteoPerio Study*”

**Albina Minlikeeva**, MD, “*Single-Nucleotide Polymorphisms in MnSOD, GSTP1, GSTM1, GPX1, GPX3, and CAT Genes and a Blood Marker of Oxidative Stress: The WEB Study*”

**Ajay Myneni**, MBBS, “*Raw Garlic Consumption and Risk of Lung Cancer in a Chinese Population*”

**Jordon Rabey**, “*Alcohol Consumption and Its Association With the Development of Renal Cell Carcinoma*”

**Michelle Sahli**, MS, “*Associations Between Dietary Intake of Lutein and Diabetic Retinopathy in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study*”

**Anushree Sharma**, MPH, “*Cigarette Brand Market Share and Trends Among Premium and Discount Cigarette Brands: Findings from NSDUH 2002-2011*”

**Caila Vaughn**, MPH, “*Sleep Quality and Markers of Breast Cancer Aggressiveness in the Western New York Exposure and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study*”

**Youfa Wang**, MD, PhD, “*Gene-Dietary Interaction and Metabolic Health Outcomes in Children: A Twin Study in China*”

**Ann Weaver**, MS, “*Breathing My Neighbor’s Air: Air Pollution Dispersion from Biomass Fires in Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh*”

**Wit Wichaidit**, MS, “*Availability of Signal Functions for Emergency Newborn Care in Rural Bangladesh, 2013*”

**Hong Xue**, PhD, “*When Do Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes Reduce Consumption? – A Dynamic Approach to Understanding Supply-Side Determinants*”

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## ***Preventive Medicine Residency Program***

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**Wudeneh Mulugeta**, MD, has been named chief resident for Preventive Medicine for 2014-2015.

Drs. **Kenyani Davis** and **Paul Washburn** will begin their PGY III in the Combined Internal Medicine/Preventive Medicine Residency Program on July 1. Davis and Washburn received their MDs from Ross University School of Medicine, Dominica.

**Erin Campbell**, MD, will complete the Preventive Medicine Residency Program on June 30.

## ***Congratulations to Our Graduates***

The following students successfully completed all degree requirements for June 15, 2014 degree conferral.

### **MS Epidemiology**

**Jordon Rabey**, “*Alcohol Consumption and Its Association with the Development of Renal Cell Carcinoma.*” Committee members: Drs. Lina Mu (major), James Marshall and Kirsten Moysich.

**Arthi Vasantharoopan**, “*Home-Based Diarrhea Case Management and the Risk of Dehydration and All-Cause Child Mortality in the Kenya Gems Site.*” Committee members: Drs. Pavani Ram (major), Amy Millen and Heather Lindstrom. Arthi has accepted a position as research scientist I at the National Institute for Research in TB, Chennai, India.

### **MPH Epidemiology**

**Linda Agyemang**, “*Does an Obesity Genetic Risk Score Interact With Energy Intake: A Critical Review of Published Literature and Preliminary Data Analyses.*” Committee members: Drs. Heather Ochs-Balcom (major) and Jean Wactawski-Wende.

**Michael Healy**, “*An Evaluation of a Cervical Cancer Screening Program Using Concurrent Visual and Human Papillomavirus Screening in Rural East India.*” Committee members: Drs. Mary Reid (major) and Vijay Jayaprakash.

**Jenna Kearly**, “*Social Support and Breast Cancer Survival: Findings from the Western New York Exposures and Breast Cancer (WEB) Study.*” Committee members: Drs. Jo Freudenheim (major) and Heather Ochs-Balcom.

**Hena Samdani**, MBBS, “*The Consumption of Sport Fish from Lake Ontario and Incidence of Colorectal Cancer in The New York State Angler Cohort (NYSAC).*” Committee members: Drs. Matthew Bonner (major) and James Olson.

### **MPH Environmental Health**

**Ross Johnston**, “*Association Between Occupational Formaldehyde Exposure and Mitochondrial DNA Copy Numbers and its Implication to Formaldehyde-Induced Hematotoxicity.*” Committee members: Drs. Xuefeng Ren (major) and Matthew Bonner.

**Mara Pusateri**, “*Mapping Childhood Blood Lead Levels and Risk Factors Using GIS: A Study of Monroe and Livingston Counties.*” Committee members: Drs. Lina Mu (major) and James Olson. Mara is continuing her graduate studies in UB's Urban Planning master's program.

**Suman Sarker**, “*Identifying Determinants of Chlorpyrifos Exposure Among Egyptian Agriculture Workers.*” Committee members: Drs. Matthew Bonner (major) and James Olson.

### **MPH Health Services Administration**

**Juliana Wilson**, DO, “*Interim Evaluation of HealthiER: A Program to Decrease Emergency Department Utilization Among Frequent Utilizers.*” Committee members: Drs. Carl Li (major) and Anthony Billittier. Juliana will be a physician at CarePoint in Greenwood Village, CO.

## ***What Opportunities EEH Offers***

EEH offers many attractive academic programs and research opportunities to help understand disease causes, preventions and to improve public health.

EEH faculty have been conducting large national and international collaboration research projects including those funded by the NIH, related to a broad range of research topics regarding public health and global health.

We offer PhD and MS degree programs in epidemiology, Master of Public Health (MPH) degrees with concentrations in epidemiology, environmental health and health services administration, and collaborative programs where students can earn an MPH and a medical, business, law, social work or pharmacy degree or an undergraduate degree in exercise science. We also offer MD/PhD and preventive medicine residency training programs. See more at our website:

<http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/epidemiology-and-environmental-health/about-us.html>

**EEH has multiple open job positions.** Please see the postings at:

[https://www.ubjobs.buffalo.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/Welcome\\_css.jsp](https://www.ubjobs.buffalo.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/Welcome_css.jsp)

## ***Support the Department's Educational and Research Mission***

Donations can easily be made online using a check, credit or debit card at <http://giving.buffalo.edu/give-to/public-health-and-health-professions.html>. Select “Make a Gift Online.” Then, select the “Use my gift for” dropdown to indicate how you want your donation used for our department. You are welcome to add additional instructions of how you may want your funds used.

Funds donated can help support our student fellowships, student awards, research seed grants, our teaching needs or research programs and more. Thank you for your past, present and future support!