

# EEH NEWS

Department of Epidemiology and 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>



October 2016

Karen DeGarmo, editor

## The Chair's Corner



Dear EEH Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends:

The fall semester is speeding along. I hope that you are all finding good challenges. As always, there is a great deal happening in the department, the school and the university. I encourage

you to explore the many, different and rich opportunities to learn more about epidemiology, environmental health, health services and public health more generally.

There are some very exciting new developments in the department. Here is just a sampling: We now have a focus on global health within the environmental health MPH program. Students in the entering MPH class are eligible for this program. There are a number of outstanding speakers coming for the EEH seminars and for other series in the school and the university. These talks are a fast track into understanding what is going on in other fields that overlap with ours.

Plans are already underway for Public Health Week next April. Keep an eye out for announcements and consider getting involved in the planning and implementing of one or more of those activities.

I hope things are going well for you all for the semester. Please let me or the other faculty and staff know if there is any way that we can help you.

*Jo Freudenheim, PhD*

UB Distinguished Professor and  
Chair

## Hello to All

Welcome as another academic year starts. It's nice to see the familiar faces and all the new ones. Some changes over the summer – the course numbers have been updated to better reflect the curriculum. If you have any questions feel free to stop by and talk with me. I am always glad to see you. Good luck with your studies.

*Karen DeGarmo*



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### Note

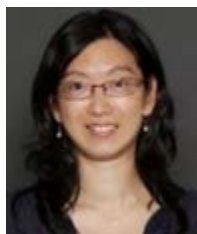
People listed below with a two digit year after the degree received this degree from EEH. For example, PhD '15, degree awarded in 2015.

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## Welcome New Faculty and Staff

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**Hailey Banack**, PhD, joined the department in September 2016 as a postdoctoral associate. She received her PhD in epidemiology from McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 2016. She is working with Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD '89, and the Women's Health Initiative/OsteoPerio studies. Her research interests include obesity, chronic disease, epidemiologic methods, and issues related to selection bias.



**Ying (Jessica) Cao**, PhD, joined the department in August 2016 as an assistant professor in the Division of Health Services Policy and Practice. She received her PhD in applied economics and management from Cornell University, Ithaca, NY in 2012. She then worked as a faculty member at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Cao is a behavioral economist whose research interests focus on judgment and decision making in health and healthcare.

**Susan Cunningham**, BS, joined the department in the Women's Health Research Center as a project staff assistant in July 2016.



**Yichen Ge**, PhD, started as a research scientist in June 2016. He received his PhD in genetics from Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China in 2014. Previously he was a visiting research scholar in the department for 1.5 years until September 2013. He is working with Xuefeng Ren, MD, PhD. His major research interests include the mechanism of environmental carcinogens, genetic and epigenetic biomarkers, hazardous chemical safety assessment, and occupational health.

**Stephanie Izard**, BS, joined the department in the Women's Health Research Center as a senior patient care specialist in June 2016.



**Ekaterina (Katia) Noyes**, PhD, MPH, joined the department in September 2016 as professor and director of the Division of Health Services Policy and Practice. She received her PhD in biophysics and neuroscience from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry in 2000 and her MPH in clinical investigation in 2002. Noyes was a professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry where she was the scientific director of the Surgery Health Outcomes and Research Enterprise. She has broad experience in health services research in health outcomes. Her research is focused on health services delivery, quality improvement and financing.

**Julia Ravenscroft**, PhD, joined the department as a postdoctoral associate in September 2016. She received her PhD in biological anthropology from the University at Albany, SUNY, Albany, NY in 2016. She is working with Kasia Kordas, PhD. Her research interests include environmental contaminants and child growth and health, developmental origins of disease, and socio-cultural determinants of health.

**Moshood (Lanre) Omotayo**, PhD, joined the department as a postdoctoral associate in September 2016. He received his PhD in international nutrition from Cornell University, Ithaca, NY in 2016. He is working with Pavani Ram, MD. His research interests include the role of nutritional factors in relation to birth outcomes in low and middle income countries

**Amanda Tober**, ASC, joined the department in the Women's Health Research Center as a research support specialist in August 2016.

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## Alumni News

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**Alexandra Baker**, MPH '16, submitted the abstract from her IP project on rabies and it has been accepted for a presentation at the Northwest Epidemiology Conference.

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## EEH Graduate Student Association

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The Graduate Student Association (GSA) of the Department of EEH elected new officers for the 2016-2017 academic year: **Rachael Burganowski**, MS, president; **Robert Coleman**, BA, vice president; **Saira Chaudhry**, BS treasurer; and **Zeinab Farhat**, MPH, secretary.

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## Faculty/Student Presentations

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**Katarzyna (Kasia) Kordas**, PhD, presented a talk titled "Dietary Patterns and Quality in Uruguayan First-Graders: Links with family and Neighborhood Characteristics" at the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University on September 15, 2016.

**Arthur Michalek**, PhD, will be traveling to Muscat, Oman in late October to lecture at their medical school as well as participate in foundation meetings of the International Consortium for the Prevention of Cancer. He will be accompanying members of the University of Nebraska and the Buffet Cancer Center.

**Heather Ochs-Balcom**, PhD '04, presented a scientific poster entitled "*The Influence of Genetic Susceptibility and Calcium Plus Vitamin D Supplementation on Fracture Risk*" at the International Genetic Epidemiology Society Annual

Meeting, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, October 2016. She also presented “*Parity and Breastfeeding Associations with Familial Estrogen Receptor-Negative Breast Cancer*” at the American Association for Cancer Research, The Science of Cancer Health Disparities Annual Meeting, Fort Lauderdale, FL in September 2016.

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## Honors and Awards

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**Robert Coleman**, MPH Epidemiology student, and **Roseann DeVito**, MPH Environmental Health student, were chosen as Student Ambassadors for SPHHP.



**Heather Ochs-Balcom**, PhD '04, and **Xuefeng Ren**, MD, PhD have been promoted to associate professor with tenure.

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## News and Notes

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**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Julie Baker Memorial Lecture:** Julie Baker, MD, PhD '07, MS '00, was a talented student, physician, researcher and humanitarian, who did her medical and epidemiology training at UB. Many of you knew Julie from her years as a student in our Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health (EEH) (while Julie attended, formerly known as the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine). Julie passed away in 2011 at the age of 39. Every year, Kirsten Moysich, PhD '94, from the Department of Cancer Prevention and Control at Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI), and also a faculty member in EEH, hosts a lecture in her honor and memory. This year the speaker was Leslie Bernstein, PhD, City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center. Her talk entitled “*Physical Activity and Breast Cancer: Biology, Epidemiology, Serendipity*” was on Oct. 17 at RPCI.

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## Research News

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**Katarzyna (Kasia) Kordas**, PhD, is PI on a grant that was transferred to UB from Pennsylvania State University in March 2016. This 5-year grant, funded from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) is entitled “Low Level Exposure to Multiple Metals: Effects on Cognition and Behavior.” This longitudinal study is an exploration of how children’s exposure to multiple metals affects specific cognitive functions and behavior through middle childhood.

**Lina Mu**, MD, PhD, is PI on a new, two year, \$233,000 award from NIEHS and NIH entitled “Metabolomics Profiling of Biological Responses to Changes in Air Pollution Levels.” This project will evaluate metabolic changes in response to air pollution exposure and provide insight on potential

mechanisms through which air pollution may increase the risk of various diseases, using specimens collected during the Beijing Olympics Air Pollution Study.

Lina is also Co-PI on a new, award entitled “Upstate Kids CVD Follow-up Support.” Richard Browne, PhD, from the department of Biotechnical and Clinical Laboratory Sciences is also Co-PI. This project, funded from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development (NICHD) / NIH, is a subcontract from a study by Erin Bell, PhD, from the University at Albany School of Public Health.

**Pavani Ram**, MD, is PI on a new, two year, \$99,000 award from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) entitled “IPA for Pavani Ram - Senior Medical Advisor for Newborn Health.” Pavani will serve as senior medical advisor for the Newborn Health, Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Division of the Office of Health, Infection Disease and Nutrition within the Bureau for Global Health at USAID. She will provide technical leadership to the Agency of Newborn Health and technical assistance to USAID missions, regional bureaus and other Global Health offices on the prevention and treatment of severe infection in the newborn.

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

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The following students successfully completed all degree requirements for degree conferrals in September 2016.

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### ***PhD Epidemiology***

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**Catherine Callahan**, MA, “*Telomeres as Targets for Persistent Organic Pollutants: The Anniston Community Health Study*”. Committee: Matthew Bonner, PhD '03, MPH (major professor), James Olson, PhD, and Xuefeng Ren, MD, PhD. Catherine is now a post-doctoral fellow at the National Cancer Institute Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics.

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### ***MS Epidemiology***

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**Mu Ge**, MBBS, MS, “*Association Between Subgingival Bacteria and Metabolic Syndrome Among Postmenopausal Women in Buffalo OsteoPerio Study*.” Committee: Michael LaMonte, PhD, MPH (major professor), Lina Mu, MD, PhD, and Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD '89. Mu is working at Independent Health as a research analyst.

**Eric Johnson**, MSW, “*Association of Depressive Symptoms with Treatment Decisions after Osteoporosis Screening in Postmenopausal Women: The Buffalo OsteoPerio Study*.” Committee: Michael LaMonte, PhD, MPH (major professor), Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD '89, and Nancy Smyth, PhD, MSW. Eric is continuing his career as a Senior Counselor at Horizon House Services here in Buffalo.

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### ***MPH Epidemiology***

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**Stephanie Kellner**, BA, “*Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Ground Level Ozone Concentration and Cardiovascular Mortality*.” Committee: Michael LaMonte, PhD, MPH (major professor) and Matthew Bonner, PhD '03, MPH. Stephanie is continuing to work at Children's Hospital.

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### ***MPH Health Services Administration***

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**Juli Chikaraishi**, BS, “*Genome Sequencing and New York State's Newborn Screening Program: Assessing the Benefits and Challenges of Implementation*.” Committee: Carl Li, MD, MPH (major professor).

**Ju Hoan Joh**, MD, MS, “*Community Outreach Program: Narrowing Health Disparity in WNY*”. Committee: Carl Li, MD, MPH (major professor) and Ranjit Singh, MB BChir. Ju is a resident physician at ECMC in Buffalo.

**Sultan Zain**, BA, “*Evaluation of Global Health Scholars Track*”. Committee: Carl Li, MD, MPH (major professor), David Holmes, MD, and Linda Kahn, PhD. Sultan is continuing his education at Rutgers in the Biomedical Sciences.

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## ***Welcome New EEH Students***

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Please welcome the following new students this fall.

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### ***PhD Epidemiology***

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**Tiffany Fanter**, BA, biochemistry, Westminster College; MS, medical science, University of Kentucky.

**Bibi Nadia Koyratty**, BS, food science, University of Mauritius; MS, nutrition, University of Montpellier.

**Jennifer Mongiovi**, BS, biological science, University of Buffalo; MS, epidemiology, Columbia University.

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### ***MS Epidemiology***

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**Shruti Dighe**, MBBS, medicine, Krishan Institute of Medical Science; MPH, environmental health, Boston University.

**Anthony George**, BS, biology, SUNY at Geneseo.

**Brendan Kerr**, BA, biology, University at Buffalo.

**Tessa Smith**, BA, biological science, University at Buffalo.

**Sarah Twardowski**, BA, anthropology, Buffalo State College.

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### ***MPH Epidemiology***

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**Alexandra Drake**, BS, biology, University at Fredonia.

**Fiby Elkomos**, MBBCH, medicine, Ain Shamas Medical School.

**Thomas Forrester**, BA, anthropology, University at Buffalo.

**Meghan Harris**, BA, biology, University at Buffalo.

**Farhana Hossain**, BDS, dental surgery, University of Dhaka.

**Matthew Hudson**, BA, history, University of Rochester; MD, University of Pittsburg.

**Ayesha, Malik**, BS, biomedical science, University at Buffalo; MBBS, medicine, St. Matthews University, School of Medicine.

**Bianca Marrara**, BS, biology, Niagara University.

**Ariana Perez**, BA, biology, University at Buffalo.

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### ***MPH Environmental Health***

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**Raymond Luu**, BS, toxicology, University of Toronto.

**Rosalind Sulaiman**, BA, psychology, Cornell University.

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### ***MPH Health Services Administration***

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**Elisabeth Brisley**, BS, biological science, Drexel College.

**Saira Chaudhry**, BS, pharmacology & toxicology, University of Buffalo.

**Julia DiTondo**, BS, biology, Mercyhurst College.

**Taylor Jezuit**, BS, sports medicine, Mercyhurst College.

**Michael Nanfara**, BA, molecular biology & biochemistry, Rutgers University.

**Joel Nassi**, BA, biological sciences, University at Buffalo.

**John Podvezko**, BS, biomedical science, University at Buffalo. (in MBA/MPH program)

**James Poss**, BS, cell & molecular biology, Humboldt University; MD, University of Nevada.

**Danielle Reber**, BS, biology, Susquehanna University.

**Betsy Skerker**, BS, biology, University at Albany.

**Danielle Vazquez**, BA, health & human services, University at Buffalo. (in MBA/MPH program)

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## ***Supporting the Educational and Research Mission of EEH***

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We are very appreciative of the support that we have received from many of you. Donations to the department are used for scholarships, for special seminars such as the Saxon Graham Lecture and to assist students in their research and education. Donations may be made online at [www.giving.buffalo.edu](http://www.giving.buffalo.edu). Select the "Use My Gift For" box and search on "epidemiology" for EEH fund options if you want your donation to be used for EEH. If you would like, you can tell us how you want your fund used, e.g., to support student fellowship, awards, research seed grants, or the teaching and research programs.