



PhD Epidemiology and Translational Science Program News

UCSF / Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics / Issue 3 Fall 2015

Welcome New PhD Students for 2015-16 !

■ Ekland Abdiwahab, MPH



Education: University of California, Davis (BS, Microbiology); University of Minnesota School of Public Health (MPH, Community Health Promotion, Health Disparities Interdisciplinary Concentration)

My academic and research interests include health equity, breast cancer disparities, social determinants of health, and methods in social epidemiology. Coordinating a breast cancer outreach and education program for African American women in Sacramento and conducting breast cancer related

fieldwork in Ghana have given me insight into the disproportionate burden of breast cancer in low-income, minority populations. In the doctoral program I would like to investigate environmental risk factors for breast cancer; specifically, how neighborhood characteristics influence breast cancer risk and outcomes. In addition to advanced epi and biostatistics methods, I am also interested in gaining skills in geospatial and social network analyses.

■ Stephen B. Asimwe, MD

I do research among adults in sub-Saharan Africa aimed at reducing mortality from infectious diseases. In this setting, high prevalence of HIV and other infectious diseases commonly result in young adults going down with various forms of critical illness. Against a backdrop of rampant resource-limitations hindering the provision of comprehensive acute care at hospitals, it is common to see a young person (like aged 20), dying from, of all things, a bacterial infection. A death of this nature would be very strange in some parts of the world. My studies mostly focus on this problem; i.e., the death of young people from infections; why it happens, and what we can do about it. I use epidemiologic causal inference techniques to investigate some mortality risk factors (HIV-associated malignancies, severe sepsis, and malnutrition). My research is also aiming to increase the utilization of aggregated clinical data and associated technologies to solve some clinical problems and to promote learning from treatment activities.



Dear Friends and Colleagues:
Please join me in welcoming our new Epidemiology and Translational Science PhD students. This is an exceptional group of students –coming into the PhD program after previous training at Yale, Berkeley, Minnesota, and UCSF's own Training in Clinical Research program-- and I look forward to watching their trajectories unfold here at UCSF. They will join a fantastic group of students currently in the program. Our students received many official recognitions of excellence this year (see page 2 of this newsletter), but I am especially impressed by their behind-the-scenes efforts to build the PhD program, enrich the university, and help one another, all while doing great population health research.

We also welcome back our fearless leader, Department Chair Dr. Bob Hiatt, who returned this spring after a sabbatical in London. Although I am sure Bob's sabbatical provided him an extremely valuable intellectual renewal and opportunity to check out London's post-punk music scene, it is nonetheless great to see Bob's warm presence back in the corner office (or rather, the corner Activity-Based-Workstation).

Last year's "research tools" workshop series, focusing on research quality, was a great success, albeit with some surprises (especially in Dr. Greenland's lecture). Many thanks to PhD student Kristen Aiemi, who did an excellent job organizing the series last year. Kristen has passed the torch to PhD student Josh Demb, who is organizing this year's series, with a (loose) theme of handling heterogeneity. Methods to address effect heterogeneity, including the challenges in estimating effects within small subgroups and generalizing research results to new populations, have been a long-standing challenge for epidemiologists. Recent technical innovations offer new tools to address these challenges and to learn more from the data at hand. This year's workshops will introduce some of these approaches. Everyone in DEB and across the university is welcome to join (and other activities for that matter).

We are also excited that Sir Michael Marmot will be giving a lecture at UCSF later this fall. Professor Marmot has been a tremendous advocate for addressing social determinants of health through-

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PhD Student + Post-Doctoral Accomplishments: 2015

PhD Student AWARDS

Kristen Aiemjoy (2013) was awarded the *UCSF Training in Clinical Research Award for Excellence in Teaching*; and was a recipient of the *Soroptimist Sierra Pacific Region Doctoral Fellowship*.

Josh Demb (2014) was awarded the *Earle C. Anthony Sciences Fellowship* for Academic Year 2015-16.

Rajkumar Kalapatapu, MD (2014) continues as a *K-23 Grant recipient of the NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)*. The grant is titled: *'OT-based Cognitive Rehabilitation of Cocaine Abusers*. Raj was also recently promoted to *Assistant Adjunct Professor, Step 2* -School of Medicine, Dept. of Psychiatry.

Alyssa Mooney (2014) is a *UCSF Eugene Cota-Robles Fellow*, for a second year 2015-16.

Heidi Moseson (2012) was awarded the *Soroptimist Doctoral Fellowship for Women Scientists Working to Advance Women's Health/Wellbeing/Rights*

Eugenie Poirot (2012) was awarded the *Earle C. Anthony Sciences Fellowship* for Academic Year 2015-16.

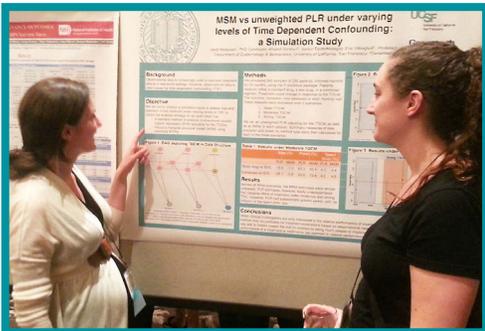
Caroline Tai (2013) was recently awarded a three-year *F31 Individual Predoctoral National Research Service Award (NRSA)* from the NIH. Her application was scored at the top 4th percentile by a review committee at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) for her proposal on Germline Genetic Pathways for Prostate Cancer Risk and Progression, sponsored by John Witte, PhD, Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

Tu My To (2013) was awarded the *Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship for 2015-16*.



Kristen Aiemjoy with Jeff Martin, MD, MPH, TICR Program Director, receives the Award for Excellence in Teaching in June, 2015

PhD Student CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS



Heidi Moseson at left explains her poster presented at this year's SER conference in Denver, CO to Harvard Post-doc Fellow, Jessica Marden.

Cecily Miller (2012) presented at the Indonesia Annual Scientific Respiratory meeting Jakarta, Indonesia, March 28, 2015. Also presented talk at the USAID TB Team Workshop on the Tool of prioritization of risk groups for TB screening, June 10, 2015 in Washington, D.C.

Caroline Tai (2013) organized a UCSF panel event titled "Race, Racism, and Health Inequalities" on May 5, 2015. The event was co-sponsored by the Associated Students of the Graduate Division (ASGD) and the new campus Consortium for Social and Population Sciences Research.

Natalie Engmann (2014) attended the 7th International Breast Density and Breast Cancer Assessment Workshop at UCSF on June 10-12, 2015.

Tu My To (2013) attended the American Diabetes Association Scientific Sessions, Boston, MA in June 2015. She presented a poster on "Comorbid Type 2 Diabetes with Low Renal Function Does Not Further Increase Risk of Cardiovascular Disease in

a Cohort of Older Mexican Americans." She also attended the Society for Epidemiologic Research Conference, Denver, CO (June, 2015) where she presented a poster titled "Type 2 Diabetes and Cognitive Function in Middle-Aged Mexican-Americans: the Role of Parental History of Type 2 Diabetes."

Josh Demb (2014) presented a poster on the "Utilization of screening mammography in older women to comorbidity and functioning: A systematic review" at the International Cancer Screening Network Conference in Rotterdam, Netherlands on June 2-4, 2015.

Sarah Ackley (2013) attended the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) in Denver, CO in June, 2015 with an oral presentation on "Causal Diagramming with Compartmental Model Diagrams: Illustrating a Parametric Alternative to DAGs."

Megha Mehrotra (2014) presented at SER in Denver, CO in June, 2015 for session on "HIV in an Era of Chronic Disease" with an oral presentation titled "The role of depression on adherence to HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis in men who have sex with men and transgender women: A marginal structural model analysis."

Heidi Moseson (2012) attended the Psychosocial Workshop (part of Population Association of America (PAA)) in San Diego in April. She also presented a poster on "MSM vs. Unweighted PLR under varying levels of time Dependent Confounding: A Simulation Study" at the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) in Denver, CO in June, 2015

Alyssa Mooney (2014) was a selected participant of the *UC Criminal Justice & Health Consortium* during the Spring of 2015.

Accomplishments 2015 - present:

Selected PhD Student Publications

Sarah Ackley:

Hargrove, JW, and **Ackley SF**. "Mortality estimates from ovarian age distributions of the tsetse fly *Glossina pallidipes* Austen sampled in Zimbabwe suggest the need for new analytical approaches." *Bulletin of entomological research* (2015):105.03: 294-304.

Fengchen L, Enanoria W, Zipprich J, Blumberg S, Harriman K, **Ackley SF**, Wheaton WD, Allpress JL, and Porco TC. "The role of vaccination coverage, individual behaviors, and the public health response in the control of measles epidemics: an agent-based simulation for California." *BMC public health* (2015): 15, no. 1 447.

Blumberg S, Worden L, Enanoria W, **Ackley S**, Deiner M, Liu F, Gao D et al. "Assessing Measles Transmission in the United States Following a Large Outbreak in California." *PLOS Currents Outbreaks*. 2015 May 7

Natalie Engmann:

Tehranifar P, Protacio A, Schmitt KM, Desperito E, Oskar S, Potter AJ, **Engmann NJ**, Terry MB. The metabolic syndrome and mammographic density in a racially diverse and predominantly immigrant sample of women. *Cancer Causes Control* Epub 2015 Jul 1. doi: 10.1007/s10552-015-0630-4.

Megha Mehrotra:

Defechereux, PA, **Mehrotra, M**, Liu, AY, McMahan, VM, Glidden, DV, Mayer, KH, Vargas, L, Amico, KR, Chodacki, P, Fernandez, T, et al. (2015). Depression and Oral FTC/TDF Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Among Men and Transgender Women Who Have Sex With Men (MSM/TGW). *AIDS Behav*. 2015

Kuebler, PJ, **Mehrotra, ML**, McConnell, JJ, Holditch, SJ, Shaw, BI, Tarosso, LF, Leadabrand, KS, Milush, JM., York, VA, Raposo, RAS., et al. (2015). Cellular immune correlates analysis of an HIV-1 preexposure prophylaxis trial. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2015; 01443.

Cecily Rose Miller:

Cattamanchi A, **Miller CR**, Tapley A, Haguma P, Ochom E, Ackerman S, Davis J, Katamba A, Handley MA. Health worker perspectives on barriers to delivery of routine tuberculosis diagnostic evaluation services in Uganda: a qualitative study to guide clinic-based interventions. *BMC Health Serv Res*. 2015 Jan 22;15(1):10. PMID: PMC4307676

Fair E, **Miller CR**, Ottmani SE, Fox GJ, Hopewell PC. Tuberculosis contact investigation in low- and middle-income countries: standardized definitions and indicators. *Int J Tuberc Lung Dis*. 2015;19(3):269-72. PMID: 25686131

Chaisson L, Katamba A, Haguma P, Ochom E, Ayakaka I, Mugabe F, **Miller C**, Vittinghoff E, Davis JL, Handley MA, Cattamanchi A. Theory-informed interventions to improve the quality of tuberculosis evaluation at Ugandan health centers: a quasi-experimental study. *PLoS One*. 2015 Jul 14;10(7):e0132573. PMID: 26172948

Shete P, Haguma P, **Miller CR**, Ochom E, Ayakaka I, Davis JL, Dowdy DW, Hopewell P, Katamba A, Cattamanchi A. Pathways and costs of care for patients with tuberculosis symptoms in rural Uganda. *Int J Tuberc Lung Dis*. 2015;19(8):912-917.

"Adaptation and Implementation Guide for Recommendations for Investigating Contacts of Persons with Infectious Tuberculosis in Low- and Middle-income Countries." TB CARE I, The Hague, 2015.

"Systematic screening for active TB: an operational guide." World Health Organization, Geneva, 2015.

Heidi Moseson

Moseson M, Massaquoi M, Dehlendorf C, Bawo L, Dahn B, Zolia Y, Vittinghoff E, Hiatt RA, Gerds C. Reducing underreporting of stigmatized health events using the List Experiment: results from a randomized, population based study of abortion in Liberia. *Int J Epidemiol* 2015, IN PRESS. ID: dyv174

Mehta KM, **Moseson H**, Rammohan SV, Albohm D, Muwowo G, Rerolle F, Sept L, Lee HL, Bendavid E. The Effect of Systematic Motorcycle Management on the Health System in Zambia: A District Level Small Cluster Interrupted time Series Field Trial. *Am J Public Health*. 2015 IN PRESS.

Eugenie Poirot

Chen I, **Poirot E**, Newman M, Deepika K, Shah R, Hwang J, Cohen J, Gosling R, Rooney L. An assessment of the supply, programmatic use, and regulatory issues of single low-dose primaquine as a Plasmodium falciparum gametocytocide for sub-Saharan Africa. 2015 *Malar J* 14:204.

Newby G, Hwang J, Koita K, Chen I, Greenwood B, von Seidlein L, Shanks GD, Slutsker LM, Kachur SP, Wegbreit J, Ippolito MM, **Poirot E**, Gosling R. Review of mass drug administration for malaria and its operational challenges. 2015 *Am J Trop Med Hyg* 14. doi:10.4269/ajtmh.14-0254.

Priya Prasad:

Prasad PA, Gleason N, Senter C, Otto M, Afshar A, Gonzales R. Individual PCP Referral Behavior Following Introduction of a Structured Referral and eConsult Program. *J Gen Internal Med* 30;2: S192, 2015

Kathryn Ray:

Rose-Nussbaumer J, Prajna NV, Krishnan KT, Mascarenhas J, Rajaraman R, Srinivasan M, Raghavan A, Oldenburg CE, O'Brien KS, **Ray KJ**, McLeod SD, Porco TC, Lietman TM, Acharya NR, Keenan JD; Mycotic Ulcer Treatment Trial I Group. Vision-Related Quality-of-Life Outcomes in the Mycotic Ulcer Treatment Trial I: A Randomized Clinical Trial. 2015 *JAMA Ophthalmol*;133(6):642-6.

Caroline Tai:

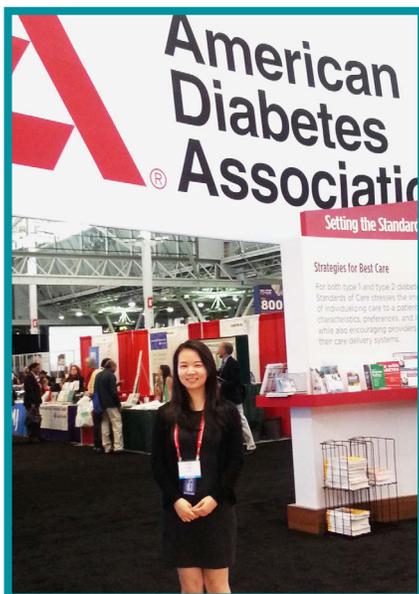
Tai CG, Graff RE, Liu J, Passarelli MN, Mefford JA, Shaw GM, Hoffmann TJ, Witte JS. Detecting gene-environment interactions in human birth defects: Study designs and statistical methods. *Birth Defects Res A Clin Mol Teratol*. 2015 May 23. doi: 10.1002/bdra.23382.

Hiatt RA, **Tai CG**, Blayney DW, Deapen D, Hogarth M, Kizer KW, Lipscomb J, Malin J, Phillips SK, Santa J, Schrag D. Leveraging state cancer registries to measure and improve the quality of cancer care: a potential strategy for California and beyond. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. 2015 Mar 11;107(5). pii: djv047. doi: 10.1093/jnci/djv047.

Wang DS, Jani AB, Sesay M, **Tai CG**, Lee DK, Echt KV, Goodman MG, Kilbridge KE, Master VA. Video-based educational tool improves patient comprehension of common prostate health terminology. *Cancer*. 2015 Mar 1;121(5):733-40. doi: 10.1002/cncr.29101. Epub 2014 Nov 12.

Tu My To: Reflections of the past year and looking forward...

by: Tu My To, MPH (Year 3 PhD student)



Tu My To at the American Diabetes Association Scientific Sessions in Boston, MA June 2015.

As summer draws to a close and as I approach my third year in this program, I reflect back with amazement at how quickly time has passed since I first entered UCSF. The past two years have been a whirlwind experience for me: attending classes, homework, seminars, research, and qualifying exams - I sometimes consider where I am and the people I see or interact with daily for granted.

With so many different areas of studies intersecting here at UCSF and in our department, it is both inspiring and humbling to learn about the research work that people are so passionately conducting each day.

This summer marks one year since I joined the Sacramento Area Latino Study on Aging (SALSA) research group. Over the past year, I've learned much as a researcher and as a PhD student from my advisor, Dr. Mary Haan. For those of you not familiar with the project, SALSA is a longitudinal cohort study on physical and cognitive impairment as well as a study of dementia and cardiovascular diseases in older Latinos in the Sacramento area. The study, which ended in 2008, has since expanded to a similar cohort study on the descendants of the SALSA participants (aptly named the 'Niños Study'). I joined the research group just as the Niños study was approaching the end of the second wave of recruitment and data collection. As researchers, we often make use of data that has been collected and is readily available without fully appreciating the beginning stages of a study and the logistics involved in the data collection process. While having only grazed the surface of this process, it has been an eye-opening experience for me to clearly understand where the data that I analyze comes from. The data collected has been made possible through the diligent effort of the nurses and study coordinators who visit participants' homes to administer surveys and collect biological specimens, as well as the time and dedication on the part of the research team leaders who painstakingly and carefully plan each step of the study.



Becoming a SALSA researcher also provides opportunities of my being able to meet and work with other researchers from esteemed academic institutions. In addition to colleagues from the University of North Carolina (who spearheaded the Niños study), my research group also collaborates with UCLA on an environmental project that examines the effect of pesticide exposure and air pollution on cognitive decline in our SALSA participants. This past June, I had an opportunity to travel to Boston to present a poster on evaluating the association between cystatin C (a marker of renal function) and cardiovascular disease in SALSA at the American Diabetes Association Scientific Sessions. Subsequently, several PhD students from my peer group and I traveled to Denver for the annual 'Society for Epidemiologic Research' SER conference, where I presented a poster on our preliminary findings for the effect of diabetes and parental diabetes on cognitive functioning in the Niños participants. Attending these conferences has certainly been one of the highlights of the past year, in part because it is fascinating to see so many different people from various places around the world congregate in one place in order to share their research and to learn from one another.

During this past spring, I also had the privilege of working with Dr. May Sudhinaraset and embarking on a pilot study that examine show Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) impacts the health access of undocumented Asian and Pacific Islanders (API) in Northern California. We are specifically seeking to better understand the types of barriers and challenges API DACA-

eligible face in accessing healthcare, while simultaneously drawing from the work of a similar study previously conducted on the Latino population. During these past few months, the research team and I have conducted several key informant interviews with representatives from various community-based organizations throughout California as well as with individuals from the undocumented API population. While the interviews have allowed us to better understand the population we are working with, I have found that the stories shared

by the individuals inspiring and motivational. We have titled our project The BRAVE Study (Building community and Raising API Voices for health Equity). I invite you to visit our website to learn more about our study and research team at: www.thebravestudy.org

Common advice students usually receive over the course of their graduate education is to talk to as many different people as possible. For me - the benefit of gained experience could not ring more true! My involvement with these projects arose from the most opportune of conversations, and I look forward to what this new academic year will bring.

PhD Program Alumni: Where are they Now?

Epidemiology + Translational Science



Katie Nishimura PhD (2014)

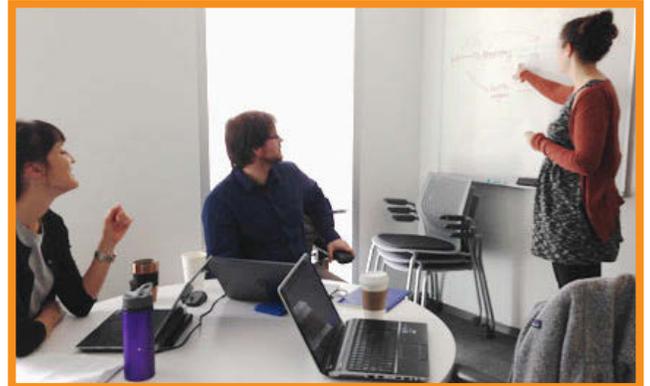
Post-Doctoral Fellow, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, NIH
Bethesda, MD

Katie is currently a post-doctoral fellow in the Epidemiology Unit in the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease at the NIH in Bethesda, MD. She recently traveled to Mexico City for an NIH collaboration with the Mexican Ministry of Health to analyze longitudinal data from an ongoing H1N1 influenza study. She is also learning to work with genetic data and is helping to identify genetic risk factors for pulmonary nontuberculous mycobacteria (PNTM) infections in patients with cystic fibrosis, and will be leading the analysis of exome sequencing data from a natural history study on patients with idiopathic CD4+ lymphocytopenia (ICL).

Katie Nishimura collaborated with Mexican Ministry of Health in Mexico City, Mexico last Spring.

UCSF -Harvard Research Collaborations

Stefan Walter (postdoctoral fellow), Elizabeth Rose Mayeda (postdoctoral fellow), and Jess Marden (doctoral candidate at Harvard School of Public Health) exchange insights about a joint research project focused on using apolygenic risk scores to predict memory decline in a biracial cohort of adults age 50+. Good company, coffee, and DAGs are a staple recipe for research project success in the Glymour research group!



Seated from left to right are UCSF's Elizabeth Rose Mayeda and Stefan Walter with Jess Marden (Doctoral candidate at Harvard School of Public Health) at the board.



Shown here is the international group of MELODEM researchers at Chateau d'Ermenonville, France in July 2015. Participants included Maria Glymour, SD, and Stefan Walter, PhD (back row-right) and Elizabeth Rose Mayeda (front row - 4th from left).

MELODEM: International Study update on Dementia Research

Elizabeth Rose Mayeda (postdoctoral fellow), Stefan Walter (postdoctoral fellow), and Maria Glymour (Program Director) traveled to Ermenonville, France to attend and present at the annual MELODEM (MEthods in LOngitudinal research on DEMentia) meeting. MELODEM is an international group of researchers focused on addressing analytic challenges and harmonizing analytic approaches across studies in dementia research. Throughout the year, Elizabeth Rose and Maria lead lively conference calls for the MELODEM working group focused on selection bias.

2015: Past Guest Speakers and Topics (Feb - May, 2015)



Nancy Krieger, PhD
Harvard University

Asking Questions that Matter for Disease Prevention and Treatment



Jan Vandenbroucke, PhD
Leiden University,
the Netherlands

Strengthening the Quality of Epidemiologic Research



Juliet Pulliam, PhD
University of Florida

Infectious Disease Modeling Research



Tyler VanderWeele, PhD
Harvard University

Assessing for Interaction in Causal Inference



Sander Greenland
University of California, Los Angeles

Bias Analysis: How to Not Assume what you Don't Know

New Student Welcome and Orientation September 9-11, 2015

PROGRAM

Wed., Sept. 9, 2015 (MH 2700)

- 9:30 – 9:35 am Welcome Students/ Intro by Maria Glymour, S.D., PhD Program Director
Introductions of 5 new PhD students.
- 9:35 – 10:00 am New Student Introduction Powerpoint Presentations
(5 min./student)
- 10:00 – 10:45 am Welcome to the ETS PhD Program: Graduate Student Handbook ; "Nuts + Bolts" Program Overview/welcome packet/hand-out forms (Patty Hoppe, PhD Program Manager and Caroline Tai, MPH)
- 11:00 – 11:20 am Training in Clinical Research (TICR) Program
Introduction to course enrollment and web navigation -
Clair Dunne, MPA, TICR Program Manager
- 11:20 – 12:00 pm Student Panel 'Q+A' session current Yr. 2-4 ETS PhD
- 12:00 – 1:30 pm Student and Epi-Biostat Faculty Lunch
- 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm Workshop #1: Primer in "R"-Programming* - MH 2500
Instructor: Yea-Hung Chen, MPH (Yr.4 PhD Student)

Thurs., Sept. 10, 2015 (MH 2700)

- 9:30 – 11:00 am Welcome and Introduction to UCSF Student Resource Directors
Graduate Division, Dean of Students: Elizabeth Watkins, PhD
- 9:30 – 10:00 am UCSF Student Health and Counseling Services: Lance Raynor, DMH
- 10:00 – 10:30 am Learning and Resource Services Director: Peggy Ryan, M.Ed
- 10:45 – 11:00 am Office of the Ombuds Director: Randy Daron, PsyD
- 11:00 – 11:30 am Outdoor Programs and Rec Sports: Ben O'Banion
- 11:30 – 11:45 am Follow-up/continuation on Student Panel 'Q+A' session questions and/or
questions that have come up since previous day session.
- 11:45 – 12:00 pm Student and Epi-Biostat Faculty Lunch - MH 2700
- 12:00 – 1:30 pm Student and Epi-Biostat Faculty Lunch - MH 2700
- 2:00 – 5:00 pm Workshop #2: Causal Inference – MH 2700
Instructor: Maria Glymour, SD

Fri., Sept. 11, 2015 (MH 2700)

- 9:30 am – 12:15 pm Workshop #3: STATA Primer – MH 2700
Instructor: Yea-Hung Chen, MPH
- 12:30 noon – 4:00 pm 'SocPop' –Welcome Lunch and Mixer
Social and Population Sciences Health & Research Consortium - MH 2103
Introductions/Welcome to PhD Students and Faculty from :
Epidemiology and Translational Science
Medical Anthropology
History of Health Sciences
Sociology
School of Nursing

2015-2016 Upcoming Seminars and Workshops

Featuring Guest Speakers:

Sir Michael Marmot, FBA, FMedSci, FRCP
Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London

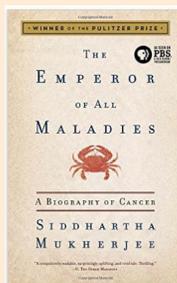
Judea Pearl, PhD, University of California, Los Angeles

Miguel Hernan, MD, MPH, ScM, DrPH, Professor of Epidemiology,
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Laura Balzer, PhD, Statistics, University of California, Berkeley

2015 DEB - ETS Bookclub:

Fall, 2015 **The Emperor of All Maladies**
A Biography of Cancer by Siddhartha Mukherjee



...Epidemiology across the Life Course...

Students embrace the art of parenting the next generation of epidemiologists!



Cecily Rose Miller (left) and Heidi Moseson (pictured in photo to right) will be welcoming their September babies.



PhD cohort get together for a picnic in Golden Gate Park- pictured from left to right are: Kristen Aiemjoy with son Orion, Caroline Tai, Heidi Moseson holding twin daughter of Maya Mascarenhas, sitting to her right; Raj Kalapatapu and Priya Prasad with son Kiran on her lap.



Having completed Part I of the Qualifying Exam, Tu My To and Caroline Tai take time for a short vacation break camping out in the Lake Shasta wilderness this summer.



Mmmm... celebrating "moms to be" -Cecily Rose Miller and Heidi Moseson with 'Karas' famous cupcakes!



Alumna Hannah Thompson's year old son, Jesse is determined and can't wait to read and learn about "Regression Methods in Biostatistics."



PhD students, Post-docs and Department Faculty gather together for wine and dinner honoring invited special seminar guest speakers throughout the Spring quarter.



"Floof", renowned PhD dinner host welcomes guests to monthly speaker seminar dinners at PhD Program Director, Maria Glymour's home.



Caroline Tai took a break between qualifying exam Parts 1 + 2 to run the San Francisco Half-marathon in July. Congrats!



After 2 years of marriage, Eugénie Poirot and Bastien Roulet celebrated their union with family and friends on July 18, 2015 in Provence, France.

Welcome New PhD Students for 2015-16!

(continued from front page)



■ Luis A. Rodriguez, MPH, RD, CNSC

Bachelor of Science, Nutritional Sciences, University of California at Berkeley – 2008

Registered Dietitian, University of California San Francisco Medical Center – 2009

Master of Public Health, Public Health Nutrition, University of California at Berkeley – 2015

My research interest involves examining the effects of highly processed foods and added sugars on the cardiometabolic health of pediatric populations. In my current role as a pediatric clinical dietitian at the UCSF Weight Assessment for Teen

and Child Health (WATCH) clinic, I work with an interdisciplinary team to treat obese patients suffering from metabolic derailments. During my MPH training, I did research at the Mexican National Institute of Public Health (INSP) looking at dietary quality, food insecurity and metabolic health in children and adolescents participating in the nationally representative Mexican National Health and Nutrition Survey of 2012.

My goal as a PhD student is to learn to develop and evaluate nutritional epidemiological interventions to prevent the development of fatty liver disease, metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes. My populations of interest include vulnerable populations, particularly low-income global populations, and minority groups in the United States.

■ Michelle Roh, MPH

My interest in infectious disease epidemiology began as an MPH student working with MSF Epicentre in Uganda conducting studies on host genetic risk factors influencing future malaria elimination strategies in sub-Saharan Africa. Having a strong background in microbiology and epidemiology, I am particularly interested in the intersection of these two fields and how they could be integrated to develop effective interventions for infectious disease diagnosis, prevention, and control. By obtaining my PhD, I look forward to advancing my knowledge in mathematical modeling and disease surveillance to understand disease dynamics, with a primary focus upon malaria. To that end, my goal is to transition these skills to direct targeted interventions and shape public policy.



■ S.Rae Wannier, MPH

My research interests lie in the interplay between our immune and metabolic function and infectious diseases, especially parasitic diseases. I am particularly interested in how human actions have complicated and affected these relationships. My research background includes several years in molecular biology and neurophysiology prior to pursuing epidemiology and research on the microbiome. My goal in pursuing a PhD is to broaden my knowledge of statistics relevant to analyzing large-scale sequencing data sets and immunological data. Ultimately, I wish to pursue a career applying epidemiologic

skills to methodological questions to better understand the role that our immune and metabolic function play in mediating the efficacy of our drugs and our ability to fight diseases.

(Director's Letter continued from page 1)

out the world, and I am excited to hear his current perspectives.

Several of our students (and alumni) presented at the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) annual conference in June. It was wonderful to see them presenting their science in this national forum. And we owe a big thank you to members the DEB Chronic Disease Division. Several members of the Division devoted a Science Friday session to SER-preparations and gave extremely useful feedback, so our students could shine at SER (which they did).

Shortly after returning from SER, our 5 second year PhD students started the first component of their qualifying exams. Everyone deserves congratulations both for passing part 1 and for the incredible work they invested in preparations for the exam. I am very grateful to the many faculty have been involved in fielding the qualifying examinations for the PhD students. Faculty invested lots of work in this process –writing insightful, challenging questions and evaluating student responses – thank you to everyone who helped.

Some UCSF news of special importance to the ETS PhD program: the Global Health PhD program, led by Dr. Lisa Thompson, anticipates its first entering cohort this winter. Many people have asked how the Global Health and Epidemiology and Translational Science PhD programs will intersect. After a first planning meeting with Lisa, I am very optimistic about the synergistic population health goals of epidemiology and global health. We look forward to collaborative training efforts.

The Graduate Division-wide Social and Population Sciences Health Research Consortium is gaining steam as well. This consortium includes PhD students from all population science programs at UCSF and is intended to foster collaborations in training and coordinated funding initiatives. Thank you to the faculty who agreed to be listed as potential mentors for students across the consortium. I invite other interested faculty to contact me to discuss how to help the Consortium and why it is important for UCSF.

As I watch students navigate their time here at UCSF, I see that all of our department members are integral to the excellence of the PhD program. Thanks again to the many faculty, staff, and post-doctoral fellows who continue – despite countless competing obligations – to build this program and support our students.


Maria Glymour, S.D.
Associate Professor and Director,
Epidemiology and Translational Science PhD Program