



Episode

SPRING 2008

DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY • SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH • THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Team Epi-Aid conducts pre-hurricane assessment in Carteret County, North Carolina

Team Epi-Aid (TEA) is a volunteer student group at the UNC School of Public Health that gives students the opportunity to gain applied public health experience. TEA provides needed surge capacity to North Carolina's local and state health departments by assisting with outbreak investigations, community assessments, and other field epidemiology activities.

Recently, Team Epi-Aid participated in a unique community assessment in Carteret County. Since 1993, Carteret County has suffered 20 fatalities and more than \$1.8 billion in property damage due to hurricanes and tropical storms. With its growing population and increasingly urbanized coastal setting, Carteret County is repeatedly at risk for hurricane-related personal injury and property damage. The Carteret County
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(From left to right) Laura Gammons, Carteret County Health Department; Jen Horney, NC Center for Public Health Preparedness and UNC Department of Epidemiology; and Steve Ramsey, Public Health Regional Surveillance Team 5, prepare handheld computers for survey data collection.

Discovering the challenges of international field research

During summer 2007, doctoral student Brettania Lopes, traveled to the Ecuadorian Amazon to help launch a new research effort focusing on water quality and related infectious diseases. Research activities included (1) conducting surveys of mosquito breeding grounds to identify species and abundance; (2) sampling drinking water and testing for both pathogens and phosphate/nitrate content; (3) conducting in-person interviews on water contamination perceptions, cases of diarrheal illness, dengue and malaria, behavioral risk factors, and demographic data; and (4) using GIS to

map drinking water sources and mosquito breeding sites within the designated research communities.

The research communities were carefully selected in consultation with a local university and with special consideration for factors known to facilitate successful research, such as health care infrastructure and community buy-in.

Despite such well-intentioned preparations, Brettania soon learned that in these remote areas, progress in research is often impeded by unforeseen logistical challenges.

Mother Nature was the first culprit. Active volcanoes, heavy rains, landslides, impassable mud roads, and road

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Andy Olshan, PhD
Department of Epidemiology

Message From The Chair

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Department of Epidemiology Spring 2008 newsletter. This is the first department newsletter since 2004, and we have a lot of catching up to do. I now have been departmental chair for a little over a year, and although I have been a faculty member for 15 years, my new position has given me even greater appreciation for the department, past and present. The department is very healthy and is an internationally recognized leader in epidemiologic research and training, all of which is a tribute to past chairs and our outstanding faculty, staff and students. This newsletter captures the vibrancy of the department with highlights of student and faculty research and staff and alumni awards. As you can see, our department continues to excel and garner local and national recognition. As an update, we have also provided listings of the current faculty and new staff.

This has been an exciting year. Carolina's School of Public Health again is ranked the leading *public* school of public health by *U.S. News & World Report*. Our School tied with Harvard University for #2 in the overall rankings, following the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, in the rankings released March 30, 2007. The last year brought unprecedented gifts to the School and University. Dr. Dennis Gillings and his wife, Joan Gillings, have committed \$50 million to the School of Public Health. Dr. Gillings, chairman and chief executive officer of Quintiles Transnational Corp., is a former UNC biostatistics professor and a current member of the School's Advisory Council. This is the largest single commitment the University has ever received. In recognition of the \$50 million, the School of Public Health will be renamed the "UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health" in September 2008. The Gillings gift will benefit the School in many areas, including the establishment of Gillings Innovation Laboratories as a mechanism to support the development of high-impact innovative research conducted by the School's faculty and students. In addition, Gillings Fellowships will allow scholars to visit the School and for UNC faculty to spend an extended period at other institutions.

The School and University have also been the recipients of another extraordinary new resource. The North Carolina General Assembly created the state's first University Cancer Research Fund (UCRF) with the passage of the new state budget in July. The fund, established to accelerate the battle against cancer at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Medicine and its Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, will receive \$25 million in 2007-2008 and \$50 million per year beginning in 2009. A number of faculty at the UNC School of Public Health hold faculty appointments at the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and the UNC School of Medicine. The Gillings and UCRF will be of tremendous benefit to our faculty and students for many years to come.

This year has also been a period of self-review and evaluation. We have just completed our graduate program review, an every-decade evaluation of our department, especially the graduate training program. This has required much effort to gather, assemble and present (our report was 970 pages!) the many dimensions of our department. Thanks to our faculty, students and alumni for responding to our requests for information. We were site-visited by a three-person team on November 1-2, 2007. I am pleased to report that the visit went very well, with recognition of the strengths of our department. As the site-visit team noted, we are "among the very best departments of epidemiology in the country."

We continue to look for opportunities to strengthen the department and have initiated new faculty recruitments in infectious disease epidemiology and pharmacoepidemiology, areas of great interest in the department and of global and domestic public health significance. The UCRF has also opened up the potential for new recruitments in cancer epidemiology. The new year should bring good news on the results of these searches.

The past few years have also brought sadness to our department and the epidemiology community. Harry Guess and Al Tyroler both passed away. We have devoted sections of the newsletter to honor their lives and accomplishments. Both were tremendous scientists, mentors and role models; they are very much missed.

We have devoted several sections to alumni news and updates. Thanks to all the alumni who have contributed to this effort. In her note, Anneclaire De Roos, president of the alumni association, provides information on how to help us stay updated.

We hope you find this newsletter useful as a means to catch up on the past, current, and future plans of the department and its people. I wish to thank all who have helped with this effort, especially Tara Strigo, Richard Kwok, Anneclaire De Roos, Nancy Colvin and Tania Desrosiers. Please contact me (andy_olshan@unc.edu, 919-966-7424) with any suggestions for the newsletter or to discuss any topic of interest to the department.

I am a genetic epidemiologist with a focus on cardiovascular disease (CVD) and CVD risk factors. Genetic epidemiology is a fascinating and fulfilling field that brings together scientists from diverse fields to study how genetic and environmental factors contribute to the pathogenesis and the population burden of disease. The sequencing of the human genome, the availability of less expensive molecular techniques, the design of powerful new computational approaches, and a greater awareness of the interplay between genes and the environment now inform the study of disease and its distribution in populations. Indeed, my studies provide evidence for a strong genetic component of obesity, hyperlipidemia, hypertension, insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). Moreover, my research has uncovered important interactions among genes influencing these CVD traits and environmental factors such as smoking and sex (hormonal milieu of genetic effects).

My research to date has largely focused on the identification and application of innovative methods and quantitative techniques in both population- and family-based studies, primarily in the context of CVD risk factors and precursors including lipoproteins, insulin and glucose plasma concentrations, obesity metrics, and measures of cardiac and arterial structure and function. The need for research into CVD risk factors is pressing, as the national prevalence of obesity, T2DM and dys-



*Kari North, PhD, associate professor
Department of Epidemiology*

lipidemia steadily increases, having already reached epidemic proportions in some populations. All of the conditions listed above are clearly associated with significant morbidity, reduced quality of life and longevity, and constitute a substantial public health burden. Obesity, T2DM and dyslipidemia have strong genetic determinants and substantial variation in disease prevalence is seen in different demographic and societal contexts. Nonetheless, variability within mostly genetically homogenous populations suggests that environmental factors importantly influence susceptibility to these conditions as well. The detection and mapping of genes that influence CVD risk and the larger task of identifying relevant functional mutations is a crucial component in determining how genes exert their effects on disease sus-

ceptibility, how gene action is influenced by environmental factors, and how interactions between genes and the environment differ between populations.

Since joining the faculty at UNC, I have held key roles in projects aiming to detect, measure, and characterize genetic and environmental factors related to variation in CVD risk factors. For example, I am the principal investigator of the “Gene-by-smoking Interaction and Risk of Atherosclerosis,” a population-based study evaluating gene-environment interaction in the etiology of CVD. In addition I collaborate in several projects using the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study, a well-characterized, bi-ethnic cohort of 15,792 men and women under active follow-up since 1987-89 (completeness of follow-up 96%) and continue my involvement with the American Indian Strong Heart Family Study (SHFS). In addition, I am currently an investigator on an ancillary study to the NHLBI Family Heart Study (FHS) entitled “Mapping Adiposity QTLs” and on the Hypertension Genetic Epidemiology Network (HyperGEN) of the Family Blood Pressure Program project. Lastly, I am an investigator on two planning grants that will foster innovative multidisciplinary institutional research, a key to the future success of genetic epidemiology. In summary, my work over the last five years has resulted in the development of an exciting research program; I love my work, and I count myself lucky to be at UNC!

Did You Know?

In Fiscal Year 2006 the Department of Epidemiology was the 5th largest department (including Research Centers) at UNC-Chapel Hill for total sponsored research awards.

Message from your Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni/ae,

Greetings from your Alumni Association! As a graduate of the department, you are automatically enrolled into the Association. As your Association representatives, we serve as liaisons between you and the School of Public Health and Department of Epidemiology. Some of our more visible activities include hosting various social functions for both alumni (such as the social at the annual SER meeting) and students (remember the bagel breakfasts during exam time?); and sponsoring the H.A. Tyroler Distinguished Alumni Award, the EPID Career Day, the biannual alumni lecture, and the Kaplan Student Publication Award. We also work closely with the department chair, the dean, and other department alumni groups to represent your interests to the school and the University at large. We are proud to have supported the nominations of two of the school's Harriet Hylton Barr Distinguished Alumni Award winners – Drs. Allen Wilcox and Aaron Blair.



Anneclaire De Roos, PhD
Alumni President

We have been working hard behind the scenes this past year to lay the groundwork for a successful future. As you can see here, one of the fruits of our labor is to try to keep you better informed about the department, activities of the Alumni Association, and also announcements and tidbits from your fellow alumni. Please take a look, and let us know what you think!

In order to continue to keep you informed, we ask that you do two things:

- If you haven't already, visit www.alumni.unc.edu and click on *Online Services* to sign up for a free e-mail forwarding service. This service will give you an e-mail address that ends with "@alumni.unc.edu" that you can keep forever. This e-mail address will automatically forward to whatever e-mail account you designate, so that you can keep this no matter if you change internet service providers or e-mail addresses. It's a convenient tool to keep in touch with those you care about.
- Please update your contact information at the same Web site. We look forward to hearing news from you and continuing to serve your interests.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to announce that Ed Wagner, MD, MPH, has been selected as recipient of the H.A. Tyroler Distinguished Alumni Award for 2007. Dr. Wagner is a senior investigator in the Center for Health Studies of the Group Health Cooperative in Seattle, Wash., as well as director of The W.A. MacColl Institute for Healthcare Innovation. His contributions to public health are far-reaching in the arenas of redesigning health care practice, health services research and health systems change. You can read further in this newsletter about the scope of Dr. Wagner's career.

Sincerely,
Anneclaire De Roos, president (PhD, 2000)
Richard Kwok, past president (MSPH, 1999; PhD, 2003)
Penny Padgett, president-elect (MPH, 1999)

2007 Harriet Hylton Barr Distinguished Alumni Award



Dr. Aaron E. Blair, recipient
2007 Harriet Hylton Barr
Distinguished Alumni Award

Congratulations to Dr. Aaron E. Blair, the 2007 recipient of the Harriet Hylton Barr Distinguished Alumni Award!

Dr. Blair has served as chief of the Occupational and Environmental Branch at the National Cancer Institute for more than 25 years. Under his leadership, the branch expanded from four investigators to more than thirty. Additionally, he was one of the first in his field to incorporate quantitative exposure assessments and molecular epidemiology components to studies. Much of his work has been with underserved populations, particularly those vulnerable to environmental pollutants,

such as agricultural workers. Blair has worked with collaborators to design a series of agricultural studies from initial hypothesis-generating studies using death certificates, to population-based case-control studies of selected cancer in agricultural areas, to prospective studies such as the Agricultural Health Study of farmers and their spouses in Iowa and North Carolina. The results of these studies have had lasting implications for researchers worldwide.

Dr. Blair earned a BA from Kansas Wesleyan University, an MS (in botany) and PhD (in genetics) from North Carolina State University, and an MPH (in epidemiology) from the UNC

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2007 H. A. Tyroler Distinguished Alumni Award

The H. A. Tyroler Distinguished Alumni Award, sponsored by The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill epidemiology chapter of the Alumni Association, recognizes the contributions and accomplishments of graduates of the UNC Department of Epidemiology. Past recipients include Drs. Debbie Winn (2005), Harvey Checkoway (2004), Hal Morgenstern (2003), Hermann Brenner (2002), Allen Wilcox (2000), Joan Cornoni-Huntley (1999), Dan Blazer (1998), Aaron Blair (1997) and Lester Lee (1996).

We are happy to announce that the recipient of the 2007 H.A. Tyroler Distinguished Alumni Award is Dr. Edward H. Wagner. Dr. Wagner received his MPH in epidemiology from the UNC School of Public Health in 1972 and is currently the director of The W.A. MacColl Institute for Healthcare Innovation in Seattle, Wash. While at UNC, Dr. Wagner founded the clinical epidemiology course at the UNC School of Medicine in partnership with Dr. Robert Fletcher, and the course is still a major component of the curriculum. With Drs. Robert and Suzanne Fletcher, Dr. Wagner co-authored *Clinical Epidemiology*, now in its fourth edition and translated in several languages. Dr. Wagner lists over 200 peer-reviewed publications, 16 editorials, and 20 books and book chapters. He has consulted for and provided professional service to major institutions such as the Office of Science Policy, Office of the Director, NIH and has served as a member of numerous

advisory committees, including the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, Pew Charitable Trusts and United Kingdom National Health Service.

Dr. Wagner's nominators included former students and colleagues. Dr. Michele Forman (MSPH, 1974; PhD, 1977) submitted a nomination letter on behalf of herself and other colleagues, noting how Dr. Wagner "has had a lasting influence on us." The letter highlighted that Dr. Wagner

has "impressed the clinical and chronic disease epidemiology world with outstanding contributions in his development of the Cancer Research Network, the Chronic Care Model, and his role in developing the HMO Research Network as well as Group Health's Center for Health Studies", and has "mentored



*Dr. Edward H. Wagner, recipient
2007 H.A. Tyroler
Distinguished Alumni Award*

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2007 H.A. Tyroler Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr. Edward H. Wagner

Ed Wagner will receive his award and will present at a departmental seminar this fall.

Please join us on
Wednesday, October 1, 2008
3:30 pm
Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building
Room 136

Reception immediately following

EPI Alumna

Heather Munroe-Blum Named 2008 School of Public Health Commencement Speaker

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Heather Munroe-Blum, principal and vice chancellor of McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and a Carolina School of Public Health alumna (PhD, 1983), will give the commencement address for the School's graduation ceremony on **Saturday, May 10, at 5 pm. in Memorial Hall.**

Munroe-Blum is recognized for her leadership and commitment to advancing McGill's international standing in research, graduate education, service and student experience. The establishment of her Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning received high praise for enhancing university life for many of McGill's 33,000 students.

"I am thrilled that Dr. Munroe-Blum has accepted our invitation to be the 2008 commencement speaker," said Dean Barbara K. Rimer. "As a highly accomplished alumna of the School of Public Health, she has shown the true value of a Carolina education. Her creative, rigorous and groundbreaking research, her leadership of a great university and her articulation of leadership are among the reasons we are so looking forward to hearing Dr. Munroe-Blum's message at commencement."

'70s

Aaron E. Blair (MPH, 1976) retired after 30 years as an epidemiologist at the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Dr. Blair served as the Chief of the Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch of the NCI until 2004. He has been appointed a National Institutes of Health Scientist Emeritus and will continue research on the role of occupational and environmental factors in the etiology of cancer.

Michele R. Forman (MSPH, 1974; PhD, 1977) is a professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center (Houston), and an adjunct senior investigator in the Laboratory of Human Carcinogenesis, National Cancer Institute. Her research focuses on early life exposures and risk of chronic disease in diverse ethnic groups within the U.S. and internationally.

'80s

Debora Barnes-Josiah (MSPH, 1985; PhD, 1989) works in Lifespan Health Services of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. She has practiced MCH epidemiology for the Nebraska DHHS for eight years now. One of her tasks is coordinating the state's Child Death Review Team, which "can be heart-breaking but is rewarding."

Her daughter, 9, is starting her third consecutive role in a community theater production (Little Timoune in Rosa Guy's "Once on This Island", which plays havoc with Dr. Barnes-Josiah's sanity but is wonderful anyway.) She also has an 11-year old son. She keeps running into UNC friends in unlikely places - such fun!

Christine M. Branche (MSPH, 1985; PhD, 1988) was director of the Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for 19 years. She became principal associate director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), also a part of the CDC, in July 2007. Before coming to the CDC, Dr. Branche's principal work was in occupational epidemiology, and her initial approach to injury prevention was through occupational injuries. She and her husband moved to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area where NIOSH is based.

Hillary Klonoff-Cohen (PhD, 1987) is a professor in the Department of Family & Preventive Medicine at the University of California-San Diego. She has a daughter Auroraleigh, aged 10, who wants to be a vet and is the youngest violinist in the San Diego Youth Symphony. The family also has a 1.5-pound Maltese puppy named Bouffie Petite Nuages ("fluffy white cloud").

Gad Rennert (PhD, 1988) is chair of the Department of Community Medicine and Epidemiology at the B. Rappaport School of Medicine of the Israel Institute of Technology and Carmel Medical Center (Technion). The Department also serves as the National Epidemiology Department of the largest not-for-profit HMO-type provider responsible for about 60% of the population. Under this mandate, the Department runs the national chronic disease register with more than 5 million diagnoses registered and has access to the full medication use file, lab results file, hospitalization file and medical records of the 4 million people covered by this HMO. Dr. Rennert also serves as director of the National Israeli Cancer Control Center of CHS - the largest health provider in Israel. The Center is responsible for National Cancer Control Programs on behalf of the Israeli Ministry of Health and the Israel Cancer Association. The research arm of the Center is responsible for running large cohort and case control studies, mostly of gene-environment interactions in the etiology of cancers in Israel (breast, colorectal, gynecological, lung, lymphomas).

Douglas L. Weed (MPH, 1980; PhD, 1982) is vice president for epidemiology and biostatistics at The Weinberg Group in Washington, D.C. For 25 years, Dr. Weed was at the National Cancer Institute, where he was chief, Office

of Preventive Oncology, and director, Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program. At The Weinberg Group, his consulting practice focuses on general causation, with application to litigation, risk assessment, pharmacovigilance and strategic policy analysis.

'90s

Daniel J. Caplan (PhD, 1995) has become professor and chair of the Department of Preventive and Community Dentistry at the University of Iowa College of Dentistry.

Peter Lercher (MPH, 1990) has been an associate professor, since 1999, in the Department of Hygiene, Microbiology & Social Medicine in the Division of Social Medicine at the Medical University of Innsbruck (MUI). Dr. Lercher conducts integrated studies into the effects of transportation noise (road and rail) and air pollution on quality of life and health in communities in alpine areas. He has worked in EU projects such as COST (air pollution), PAN - EEC (Concerted Action on Protection Against Noise, 1998-2000) and NOPHER (Noise Pollution Health Effects Reduction, 2000-2003). Dr. Lercher served as chair (1993-1998) and co-chair (1998-2003) of Team 3 (non-auditory physiological effects induced by noise) in the International Commission on the Biological Effects of Noise (ICBEN). In July 2003, he

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was appointed co-chair of the International Commission on the Biological Effects of Noise (ICBEN). Dr. Lercher also serves on the editorial board of the journal, *Noise & Health*.

Penelope (Penny) J. Padgett (MPH, 1999) received her MPH in Infectious Disease Epidemiology in December 1998. She initially returned to her faculty position in the biology department at Shippensburg University, but the family decided to make N.C. their permanent home in August 1999. Since returning to her home state, she has worked in a variety of public health areas including diabetes education and public health preparedness. In August 2004, she accepted a position as project coordinator for the Medical Monitoring Project, a CDC-funded, enhanced HIV surveillance program housed in the HIV/STD Prevention and Care Branch of the N.C. Division of Public Health. She and husband Bobby Silvers are beginning to enjoy a new phase of their lives, that of empty nesters, as their older daughter, Margaret, is preparing for graduate school and their younger daughter, Amanda, began her senior year at Mary Baldwin College.

Lisa Pastore (MSPH, 1993; PhD, 1997) is on the faculty of the OB/GYN department at the University of Virginia. She currently has two grants funded by NIH to study complementary-alternative medicine for OB/GYN patients and infertility topics.

Robert William Prasaad Steiner (MPH, 1988; PhD, 1998) married Tibetan refugee Cheme Yudon, the youngest daughter of the late Pemakod Jedung Tulku Rimpoche, in November 2005. They currently live in Louisville, Kentucky. Dr. Steiner recently transferred his primary appointment as professor of the Department of Family and Geriatric Medicine at University of Louisville, where he served as a clinical teaching scientist and community health advocate for more than 30 years, to the new University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences as professor of the Department of Health Management and Systems Sciences.

Verna (Lamar) Welch (PhD, 1998) is director of the Cardiovascular Health Research Program at the Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Welch was recently awarded a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant that will allow researchers to evaluate a program designed to adjust clinical encounters based on patients' health literacy. Specifically, the protocol is to discover whether clinical screening for health literacy improves quality of care and reduces disparities in hypertension management. Dr. Welch says, "Morehouse School of Medicine feels a lot like home, but more are welcome!" Four UNC trained epidemiologists, Aurelian Bidulescu (PhD, 2006), Rebecca Din-Dzietham (MPH, 1992; PhD, 2000),

Gregory Strayhorn (MPH, 1978; PhD, 1987), and Verna Welch, have made Morehouse School of Medicine their academic home and are collaborating on exciting projects dealing with cardiovascular diseases, metabolic syndrome and health literacy.

'00s

Leslie Elliott (PhD, 2004) currently works as the senior epidemiologist of chronic diseases at the Washoe County District Health Department in Reno, Nev. Dr. Elliott also holds a position with the University, which involves conducting research and working with graduate students. She was recently awarded a two-year grant to study predictors of compliance with the Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act.

Martha Felini (PhD, 2006) recently received the Outstanding Public Health Advisor Award from the Public Health Student Association of the University of North Texas, School of Public Health, where she is assistant professor of epidemiology.

Maria Gallo (PhD, 2005) currently telecommutes from Durham to the Division of Reproductive Health at the CDC, but plans to move to Atlanta soon, along with husband Matthew and two (adorable!) boys, Malachi (3.5 years) and Max (8 months).

Mia Gaudet (MSPH, 2002; PhD, 2005) recently completed a research fellowship

in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics at the National Cancer Institute. In January 2008, she started at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (New York City) as an assistant attending epidemiologist.

Sarah Knowles (PhD, 2005) is the research and publications coordinator in the Department of Health Services Research at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute in Palo Alto, Calif. She married fellow Tarheel, Jason Merker, in March 2007, in Big Sur, Calif., and they are currently living in Palo Alto while he completes his medical training at Stanford.

Kristen Kucera (MSPH, 2002; PhD, 2006) is an assistant professor in the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Duke University Medical Center, where she conducts research on work- and sports-related injuries. Current funded projects include validation of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's injury surveillance system and ergonomic interventions for N.C. crab-pot fishermen.

Neely Kaydos-Daniels (MSPH, 1999; PhD, 2002) completed her Epidemic Intelligence Service training with CDC in 2004, and since then has been a research epidemiologist at RTI International in Research Triangle Park, N.C. Dr. Kaydos-Daniels currently studies food safety, preparedness and disease surveillance,

and HIV. She and husband Richard live in Raleigh with their two daughters. Baby Lucy was born in September 2007 to the delight of her parents and big sister Sylvie (age 2). Dr. Kaydos-Daniels would love to hear from fellow alumni and can be reached at nkaydos@yahoo.com.

Trang Nguyen (PhD, 2005) completed her CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service fellowship at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in June 2007. She will continue to serve there as director for data analysis and syndromic surveillance in the Bureau of Communicable Disease.

Christy (Peterson) Porucznik (MSPH, 2000; PhD, 2003) has been appointed as assistant professor (tenure-track) in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah. She and husband Jeff celebrated their daughter Zoey's first birthday this past June.

Daphne Rattner (PhD, 2001) lives and works in Brasilia, the Federal District of Brazil, for the Brazilian Ministry of Health. Dr. Rattner is the substitute coordinator for the country's Women's Health Program. She uses her knowledge of epidemiology to transform public policies and has helped to build the National Public Healthcare System, which offers access and quality health care to everybody. Dr. Rattner is also an activist of the Natural Childbirth

Movement, represented in the U.S. by the Coalition for the Improvement of Maternity Services (CIMS). In 2005, she published a book, *Humanizadno nascimentos e partos* (Humanizing Childbirth).

Leah B. Sansbury (MSPH, 2002; PhD, 2004) recently completed her fellowship in the Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program at the NCI in Bethesda, Md. She is now program director for the Epidemiology and Genetics Research Program in the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences at the NCI. Leah and William "Trip" Boyer were married in September 2006 in Washington, D.C., where they currently reside with their three dogs.

Sumitra Shantakumar (PhD, 2006) is an epidemiologist in the Worldwide Epidemiology Department at GlaxoSmithKline, based in Research Triangle Park, N.C. She is responsible for conducting epidemiologic studies in support of early and late drug development programs in oncology. Sumitra lives in Chapel Hill with her husband, Alex.

Sara Moore Stroud (MSPH, 2000) moved to Chicago after completing her master's degree, where she worked for the University of Chicago overseeing a toxoplasmosis study. The following year, she entered the pharmaceutical services industry and worked for a leading technology company ClinPhone, Inc., where she held positions in

project management and business development. She returned with her family to N.C. in 2005, and they now live in her hometown of Greensboro. Sara and husband Taylor have two sons, aged 4 and 1. They are being raised as loyal Tarheel fans, of course!

Rachel Williams (PhD, 2003) is manager in the Worldwide Epidemiology Department at GlaxoSmithKline and an adjunct assistant professor in the

UNC Department of Epidemiology. While at GSK, she has done research on gastrointestinal diseases, menopausal symptoms, and conditions associated with decreasing testosterone. She served as president of the UNC Alumni Association Epidemiology Division, from 2004 to 2005. Dr. Williams remains involved in the EPID department by advising one of the current PhD students. She has two boys, Ben (5 years) and Henry (2 years).

Harriet Hylton Barr Distinguished Alumni Award

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School of Public Health.

Established in 1975, the Barr Award recognizes the achievements of alumni and their contributions to public health. For many years, the award has carried the name of its 1980 recipient — Harriet Hylton Barr — to honor her contributions to the field. Barr, who earned her MPH from UNC in 1948, is a clinical associate professor emeritus in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education. She was the School's first director of alumni affairs, a position she held for 25 years. She was responsible for getting alumni more involved with the School and thus keeping the School in closer touch with public health practitioners. The Barr Award recognizes leadership, experimentation, collaboration and innovation within the profession; impact within the practice arena; and outstanding service beyond the requirements of the recipient's employment.

Join us in congratulating Dr. Blair!

2007 H. A. Tyroler Distinguished Alumni Award

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countless students and faculty across the U.S. and international settings." Dr. Forman also noted that her letter summarized letters and other communications received from colleagues and current associates, and stated she was "the village scribe for many who cannot think of anyone else who is more deserving. Just as Al Tyroler had a vision for cardiovascular epidemiology, Ed Wagner is a prime mover in redesigning health care practice, health services research and health systems change."

Join us in congratulating Dr. Wagner!

March of Dimes honors Siega-Riz for work in maternal-fetal nutrition

Anna Maria Siega-Riz, PhD, RD, associate professor in the Departments of Epidemiology and Nutrition at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Public Health, has received the March of Dimes Agnes Higgins Award.

The annual award recognizes distinguished achievement in research, education or clinical services in the field of maternal-fetal nutrition. Awardees receive a \$3,000 prize and the invitation to present a lecture at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting.

The meeting was held Nov. 3-7, 2007 in Washington, D.C. Dr. Siega-Riz presented a lecture on, "Maternal Obesity: The Number One Problem Facing Prenatal Care Providers in the New Millennium," on Nov. 5.

Dr. Siega-Riz's research interests include maternal nutritional status and its relationship to birth outcomes, gestational weight gain and obesity development, and reproductive epidemiology. She is co-investigator on an epidemiological study examining the role of infection, stress, physical activity and nutrition on preterm births.



Anna Maria Siega-Riz, PhD, RD

Al Tyroler (1924 - 2007)

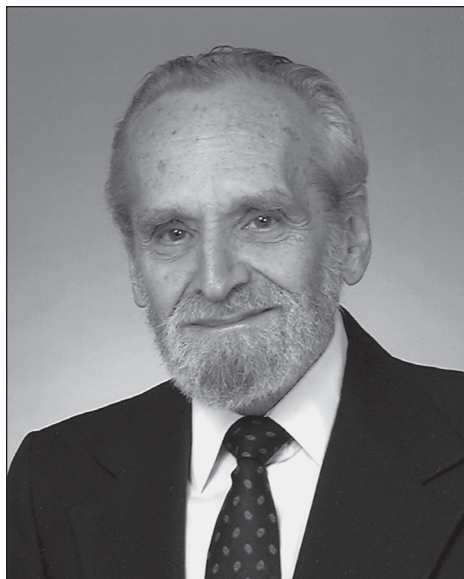
Herman Alfred (Al) Tyroler, MD, Alumni Distinguished Professor of epidemiology passed away on February 18, 2007 at the age of 82.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1924, Dr. Tyroler graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Ohio University in 1943, received his medical degree from New York University College of Medicine in 1947, and completed additional medical training at Cornell University, New York Medical College and the Metropolitan Hospital in New York City.

He joined the faculty of our Department of Epidemiology in 1960, holding a full professorship from 1967-1979, after which he was named Alumni Distinguished Professor.

Dr. Tyroler was a world-renowned cardiovascular disease epidemiologist and a close colleague and mentor to many at the UNC Collaborative Studies Coordinating Center. As the primary epidemiologist for the Lipid Research Clinics Program, he helped design and conduct all four studies done in the 1970s and 1980s. He was one of the primary scientists involved in developing collaborations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union on cardiovascular disease studies and worked on manuscripts in this area until his retirement in the 1990s. He also was involved in the original proposal to conduct the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) study.

He worked with the Evans County Heart Study and the



Dr. H.A. Tyroler

Occupational Health Studies Group. He directed the Cardiovascular Training Grant for more than 20 years with co-directors Drs. Gerardo Heiss and Wayne Rosamond. He taught cardiovascular disease epidemiology and co-taught a course with Dr. Ed Davis in clinical epidemiology.

Dr. Tyroler's distinguished career at UNC spanned more than 40 years and established his reputation as an innovative scientist, a leader in public health, and a dedicated educator and mentor to numerous students and colleagues. He achieved national prominence and wide recognition for his scientific work in the United States and for extensive collaborations with academic and governmental institutions abroad. Our Department of Epidemiology grants its highest alumni

honor in his name to graduates recognized for their scholarship and outstanding contributions to public health.

Dr. Tyroler will be remembered with affection and gratitude as a lifelong learner and a brilliant teacher who shaped the lives of those with whom he worked. There are few people anywhere who have achieved the kind of impact that Dr. Tyroler did. We are proud that he was a faculty member at the School and mourn his loss.

Memorial gifts may be made to UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health Foundation, Inc., H.A. Tyroler Scholarship Fund, CB #7407, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7407.

Harry Guess (1940 – 2006)

Harry A. Guess, MD, PhD, professor of epidemiology and biostatistics, passed away on January 1, 2006 at the age of 65.

Born in New York City in 1940, he attended Georgia Tech on a Navy ROTC scholarship and graduated in 1964 with both a BS and a MS. He served in the United States Navy for five-and-a-half years on Admiral Rickover's staff at the Atomic Energy Commission, Division of Naval Reactors. After completing his military service, Dr. Guess attended Stanford University, where he received a PhD in mathematics and MS in operational research in 1972. After a year of teaching, he spent two years at Bell Laboratories developing statistical models of communication networks and went to NIH to work on mathematical population genetics and biostatistics. There he and others developed what has become a widely used method for calculating the statistical uncertainty in cancer risk estimates based on animal data. This work kindled an interest in taking a more biological approach to understanding human health risks. Dr. Guess enrolled in medical school at the University of Miami (MD 1979) with epidemiologic research as his career goal. His residency training in pediatrics was at UNC-Chapel Hill. He later added board certification in preventive medicine and public health.

In 1985, Dr. Guess established the epidemiology department at Merck Research Laboratories and retired as vice president from Merck in 2003, to become the first director of the University of North Carolina-GlaxoSmithKline Center of Excellence in Pharmacoepidemiology and Public Health at UNC, and professor of epidemiology, biostatistics and pediatrics. Dr. Guess led the UNC Centers for Education and Research on Therapeutics (CERTS), which focused on the optimal use of drugs, medical devices and biological products in pediatrics. He also obtained NIH funding to lead UNC as part of a large NIH roadmap initiative to study the dynamic assessment of patient-reported chronic disease outcomes (PROMIS). Dr. Guess' career straddled pharmacoepidemiol-



Dr. Harry A. Guess

ogy and public health, and he strove to address practical issues facing the industry and clinicians with an academic and innovative approach to complex problems. He made notable contributions to research on vaccines, the natural history of complex disease, development and validation of clinical trial end points and patient-reported outcomes, and pharmacoepidemiology, in many cases setting the industry standard. He was a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Preventive Medicine, and the American College of Epidemiology. He co-authored more than 150 research articles and served on the editorial boards of *Epidemiology*, *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, and *Journal of Epidemiology and Biostatistics*. He was named to Who's Who in Medicine and Health in 2003. He gave invit-

ed congressional testimony on medical data privacy in 1998. Dr. Guess received the Award for Sustained Scientific Excellence from the International Society for Pharmacoepidemiology in August 2005. Over the years, he was a mentor to numerous junior and senior scientists at Merck, UNC, and other institutions, guiding their development and improving their understanding of epidemiological concepts. His success in academia and research was remarkable, yet his research endeavors were always accomplished while pursuing one of his passions: teaching and advising graduate students. At UNC and elsewhere, he was known as the consummate teacher and sought-after adviser for graduate students and colleagues.

Memorial gifts may be made to UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health Foundation, Inc., Harry A. Guess Scholarship Fund, CB #7407, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7407.

An additional scholarship has been presented by Merck Research Laboratories. Contributions may be made to UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health Foundation, Inc., The Harry A. Guess-Merck Scholarship in Pharmacoepidemiology, CB #7407, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7407.

Welcome

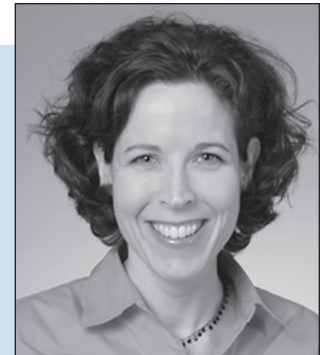
New Faculty Members (2005-2007)

2005

David Margolis, MD
Professor (primary, Medicine)

Philip Setel, MA, PhD
Research Associate Professor

Amy Sims, PhD
Research Assistant Professor



Carri Casteel, MPH, PhD
Research Assistant Professor

2006



Ka He, MPH, ScD, MD
Assistant Professor
(primary, Nutrition)



Jessie Satia, PhD
Assistant Professor
(primary, Nutrition)



**Anna Maria Siega-Riz,
PhD, RD**
Associate Professor



**Andres Villaveces, MPH,
PhD, MD**
Research Assistant Professor

2007

Sonia Napravnik, MSPH, PhD
Research Assistant Professor



Nora Franceschini, MPH, MD
Research Assistant Professor



**Abigail Norris Turner,
MSPH, PhD**
Research Instructor

Epi FACULTY NEWS

Department of Epidemiology Faculty (by program areas)

Cancer

Andrew Olshan Program Leader

Jeannette Bensen
Kathleen Dorsey
Marilie Gammon
Robert Millikan
Charlie Poole
Robert Sandler
Jessie Satia
Jane Schroeder
Jennifer Smith

Cardiovascular Disease

Gerardo Heiss Program Leader

Jiu Chiu Chen
Kelly Evenson

Nora Franceschini
Ka He
Sara Huston
Jay Kaufman
Carol Murphy
Kari North
Wayne Rosamond
Kathryn Rose
Philip Setel
Eric Whitsel

Environmental Occupational

Marilie Gammon Program Leader

Carri Casteel
Jiu Chiu Chen
Julie Daniels
Steve Marshall
Andrew Olshan

Charlie Poole
David Richardson
Jane Schroeder
David Weber
Eric Whitsel
Steve Wing
Karin Yeatts

Health Care

William Miller Program Leader

Frieda Behets
Jeannette Bensen
Jiu Chiu Chen
Sara Huston
Debra Irwin
Michele Jönsson-Funk
David Margolis
Steve Meshnick
Sonia Napravnik
Wayne Rosamond
Kathryn Rose
Jane Schroeder
Jennifer Smith

Infectious Disease

Steve Meshnick Program Leader

Lorraine Alexander
Ralph Baric
Frieda Behets
Myron Cohen
J. Ed Hall
Michele Jönsson-Funk
Pia MacDonald
David Margolis

Robert Millikan
Sonia Napravnik
Abigail Norris Turner
Audrey Pettifor
Victor Schoenbach
Philip Setel
Amy Sims
Jennifer Smith
Lola Stamm
James Thomas
Annelies Van Rie
David Weber
Sharon Weir

Injury

Steve Marshall Program Leader

Carri Casteel
Jiu Chiu Chen
Robert Millikan
David Richardson
Andres Villaveces

Reproductive

Anna Maria Siega-Riz Program Leader

Frieda Behets
Julie Daniels
Kelly Evenson
Debra Irwin
Michele Jönsson-Funk
Jay Kaufman
Steve Meshnick
Andrew Olshan
Audrey Pettifor
Jennifer Smith



Did You Know?

Total sponsored research awards by the Department of Epidemiology faculty PI's for Fiscal Year 2006 totaled \$25,927,596.



The 2007 Project Ghana mission team gathers outside a clinic in the Nima township in Accra, Ghana. M. Abinee Amamoo is fourth from the right on the front row, and Dr. Keisha Gibson is second from the right on the front row.

Investigating Kidney and Cardiovascular Disease in Ghana

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is responsible for 1.4 percent of deaths worldwide and is an important contributor to the growing burden of cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of mortality worldwide. There is an extreme paucity of data revealing the impact of CKD in underdeveloped West African countries, including Ghana, where kidney replacement modalities such as dialysis and transplant are scarce. Early diagnosis and management of kidney disease to prevent or delay the development of end-stage kidney disease and avert the cardiovascular problems associated with CKD is paramount in these countries.

The burden of these related diseases and the complication of limited access to healthcare in Ghana became apparent for two UNC students when each experienced unexpected deaths of family members over the past year—one from kidney failure, and the other from complications of hypertension. Motivated by the personal impact of these deaths that highlighted a much larger issue in Ghana, UNC Kidney Center fellows Dr. Keisha Gibson and Ms. M. Abinee Amamoo, in conjunction with Dr. Susan L. Hogan (PhD, 2001) of the UNC Kidney Center, pursued a grant from the University Research Council to evaluate the prevalence of early CKD and its risk factors, such as hypertension and diabetes, in Ghana.

During summer 2007, the two fellows traveled to Accra, Ghana, to assess the feasibility of their project in terms of resources, local participation, and potential language barriers. During this initial visit, they also worked with missionaries from Project Ghana, a collaboration of U.S. volunteer health care specialists who provide free onsite medical, dental, and vision screening and care to underserved and impoverished communities. They participated in the medical mission at a Project Ghana clinic in Nima, one of the poorest townships in Greater Accra. The experience was enlightening and overwhelming. Within three days, more than 600 people received medical services. Unfortunately, hundreds more were turned away due to limited resources and time.

Gibson and Amamoo plan to return to Nima with Project Ghana in June 2008 to implement the CKD project and expand the project into a collaborative effort between the UNC Kidney Center, Korle Bu teaching hospital in Accra and the Noguchi Clinical Research Institute.

M. Abinee Amamoo is currently working toward a PhD in epidemiology, and Keisha Gibson is completing her postdoctoral studies while working toward an MPH in epidemiology. For more information about the CDK project, contact amamoo@email.unc.edu.

“Back to School” in Jo’berg

When I started looking for international collaborators for my dissertation research, the challenge was to find a clinic in sub-Saharan Africa where enough HIV-infected children were on antiretroviral therapies (ART) and where basic infrastructures were in place to support quality research. It was during this challenging search



Marcel Yotebieng, MPH, MHCH, MD
Doctoral student, Department of Epidemiology

for a suitable location that I was introduced to researchers at the Harriet Shezi Children’s Clinic, Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Despite the fact that South Africa’s health care infrastructure is far better compared to the rest of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the need for skilled and trained public health personnel in the country is as acute as everywhere else on the continent. So in exchange for their collaboration on my dissertation research, I was asked to go to Johannesburg and teach an 11-week introductory course in epidemiology. Although I have served several times as a teaching assistant in various epidemiology classes at UNC, the challenge of designing a class and teaching it independently in a non-academic setting was both appealing and unnerving. In a teaching environment like UNC, with an official registrar, *Blackboard* and other administrative and educational resources, the main difficulty one might expect as an instructor is creating the syllabus and developing lectures. With the help of faculty at UNC, the syllabus and lectures were quickly assembled and approved. The unexpected difficulties that remained to be faced were all logistical.

The first logistical difficulty was how to finance my three-month stay, since my hosts had no money to fund the class. Thanks to the UNC Center for Global Initiatives Pre-Dissertation Travel Award and supplemental funding from UNC Fogarty, a huge portion of my budget needs were met, and I made my travel arrangements. When I arrived in Johannesburg in May 2007, I was expecting to hold my first class two days later. But it was two weeks later that I received a list of enrolled students, a tentative schedule and an assigned location to hold class. In addition, the price of the textbook recommended for the class was double its U.S. price and subsequently, the book had to be ordered from the United Kingdom. During the eight weeks of class, we met at three different locations, and none of the students were able to get the textbook. Despite these difficulties, the enthusiasm for the class remained very high. Only four of 18 participants dropped out, and attendance remained relatively high, given the instability of the schedule and location. The class atmosphere was great; students asked good questions, which were usually related to ongoing research projects in which one or more student participants were involved. For me, the experience was equally rewarding. I provided full consultation for one of my students’ ongoing projects. And I learned invaluable practical lessons about teaching epidemiology in a context with many fewer resources than we are blessed to have at UNC.

Marcel Yotebieng is a physician from Cameroon and a PhD student in the Department of Epidemiology. He can be contacted at yotebieng@unc.edu.

Epi STUDENT NEWS

Student Grants and Awards (2005-2007)

GRANTS

Christy Avery

American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship, "Tobacco exposure, DNA repair genes, and atherosclerosis: the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) study" (July 2006-June 2008)

Sandra Deming

U.S. Department of Defense, "A Population-Based Investigation of the Role of Focal Adhesion Kinase (FAK) and E-cadherin Expression in Breast Cancer Promotion, Progression and Therapeutic Response"

Brian Fink

Lance Armstrong Foundation, "Flavonoid intake and breast cancer risk and survival using Long Island Breast Cancer Study data" (2005-2006)

Kelly Quinn

Center for the Study of the American South 2006 Summer Research Grant, "Black-White Mortality Disparities in the Post-1960s U.S. South: Influences of Urbanization over Time"

AWARDS EXTERNAL TO UNC

Suzanne Gilboa

Abraham Lilienfeld Student Prize Winner, SER, "Relationship between Ambient Air Quality and Selected Birth Defects, Seven-County Study, Texas, 1997-2000" (2005)

American College of

Epidemiology Student Prize (2006)

Ruchika Goel

AIIMSONIANS OF AMERICA

Annual Govind Verma Memorial Research Fellowship (2007)

Rotary International World Level Ambassadorial Scholarship (2006-2007)

Anjum Hajat

National Science Foundation East Asia and Pacific Summer Institute (2007)

Christopher Heaney

Environmental Leadership Program Fellow, Southeast Region Fellowship Network leadership training for emerging professionals in the environmental field (2007-2008)

Sarah Landis

PEO Scholar Award, Pre-doctoral Fellowship (2005-2006)

NEWAID Foundation Pre-doctoral Fellowship (2005-2006)

Sandi McCoy

CDC National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STDs and TB Prevention Dissertation Award, "Understanding the Care-Seeking Behavior of HIV-Positive Persons in North Carolina" (2007)

Abigail Norris Turner

PEO Scholar Award, selected following national competition with students from all academic disciplines, recognizing academic excellence and achievement

(August 2005-May 2006)

Cheryl R. Stein

American College of Epidemiology Student Prize (2007)

UNC CAMPUS-WIDE COMPETITIVE AWARDS

Lauren Abbate

UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School's Graduate Education Advancement Board's Recognition Award, "Is Obesity a Factor in Developing Knee Osteoarthritis?" (2006)

Kim Angelon

U.S. Department of Education, Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship (2007-2008)

Semra Aytur

UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School's Graduate Education Advancement Board's Impact Award, "Relationships of Land Use and Transportation Policies to Physical Activity and Obesity" (2005)

Ruchika Goel

UNC Graduate Merit Assistantship (2006-2007)

Elizabeth F. Jackson

UNC Graduate School Off-Campus Dissertation Award (Spring 2007)

Sarah B. Knowles

UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School's Graduate Education Advancement Board's Impact Award, "Incidence and Severity of Injury among North Carolina

High School Athletes" (2005)

Sarah H. Landis

UNC Graduate School Dissertation Completion Award (2006-2007)

UNC Graduate School Off-Campus Dissertation Award (Fall 2005)

Eric Lofgren

UNC Graduate Merit Assistantship (2007-2008)

Maria Mirabelli

UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School's Graduate Education Advancement Board's Impact Award, "Exposure to Airborne Hog Operations as a Trigger of Childhood Respiratory Symptoms" (2005)

Rachel Palmieri

UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School's Graduate Education Advancement Board's Recognition Award, "North Carolina Women's Health Report Card" (2006)

I-Jen Pan

UNC Graduate School, Dissertation Completion Award (2007-2008)

Brian W. Pence

UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School's Graduate Education Advancement Board's Recognition Award, "An Approach to More Effectively Treat HIV Patients who Suffer from Substance Abuse and Mental Illness" (2006)

Lynette Phillips

UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School's Graduate Education Advancement

Epi STUDENT NEWS

Board's Impact Award,
*"Hormonal and Reproductive
Risk Factors and Breast
Cancer"* (2007)

E. Danielle Rentz
UNC-Chapel Hill
Graduate School's Graduate
Education Advancement
Board's Recognition Award,
*"Physical and Sexual Violence
in the Lives of North Carolina
Women: Prevalence and
Associations with Negative
Mental Health"* (2006)

Whitney Robinson
Latane Family Fellowship
in Human Science, Center
for Human Science

(2006–2008)

David L. Rosen
UNC-Chapel Hill
Graduate School's Graduate
Education Advancement
Board's Impact Award,
*"Mortality Among North
Carolinians with a History of
Incarceration"* (2007)

Sumitra Shantakumar
UNC Graduate School,
Dissertation Completion
Award (2005–2006)

Genee Smith
UNC Graduate School,
Minority Presence
Fellowship for Doctoral
Study (2006–2007)

Jeannette Stingone
UNC Graduate School,
Joseph E. Pogue Fellowship
(2007–2012)

Daniel Taber
UNC Graduate School,
Caroline H. and Thomas
S. Royster Jr., Fellowship
(2005–2010)

Kristen Tillerson
UNC Graduate Merit
Assistantship (2007–2008)

Daniel Westreich
UNC Graduate School
Transportation Grant
recipient (2006)

UNC Center for Women's
Health Research Award for
Excellence (2006)

Sirin Yaemsiri
UNC Graduate Merit
Assistantship (2007–2008)

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH COMPETITIVE AWARDS

Ruchika Goel
UNC School of Public
Health, Miriam Cole
Scholarship (2006)

Heather Keenan
Greenberg Dissertation
Award (2005)

Sirin Yaemsiri
Ibrahim Fellowship (2007)

DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY COMPETITIVE AWARDS

Christy L. Avery
Rebecca James Baker
Memorial Scholarship
(2006)

Tania A. Desrosiers
Sidney Kark Award for

Distinguished Teaching
Assistant (2007)

Adam Goode
Cornoni-Huntley
Scholarship (2007)

Maria R. Khan
Sidney Kark Award for
Distinguished Teaching
Assistant (2005)

Abigail Norris Turner
Sidney Kark Award for
Distinguished Teaching
Assistant (2005)

Jennifer M. Norton
Barbara Sorenson Hulka
Dissertation Award (2007)

The Thomas Wong and
Susanne Moulton Endowed
Scholarship (2006)

Kimberly A. Porter
Sidney Kark Award for
Distinguished Teaching
Assistant (2007)

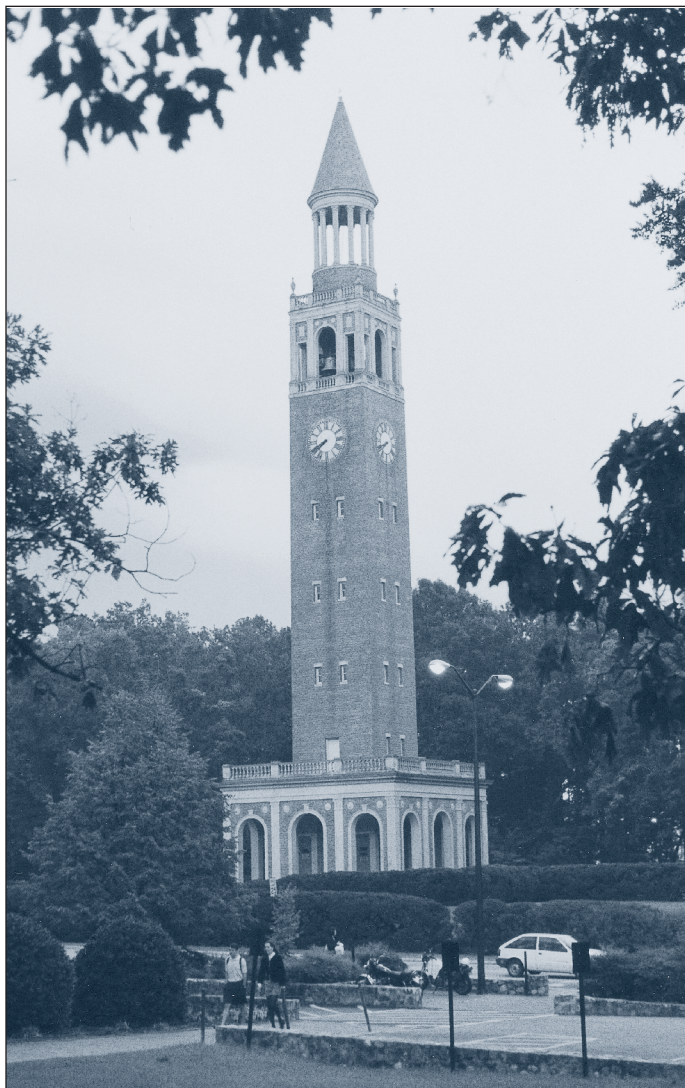
Sudha Raman
Cornoni-Huntley
Scholarship (2006)

Cheryl R. Stein
Berton H. Kaplan Student
Publication Award, in
recognition of best student
paper accepted for publica-
tion in the calendar year
2005 (2006)

Myduc Ta
Rebecca James Baker
Memorial Scholarship
(2007)

Emily Vavalle
Cornoni-Huntley
Scholarship (2005)

Daniel Westreich
Berton H. Kaplan Student
Publication Award, in
recognition of best student
paper accepted for publica-
tion in the calendar year
2006 (2007)



Jennifer Norton Wins 2007 Barbara Sorenson Hulka Dissertation Award

Congratulations to Jennifer M. Norton (PhD, 2006), recipient of the first annual Barbara Sorenson Hulka Dissertation Award! The award recognizes excellence in doctoral research and honors Dr. Hulka, former chair of the epidemiology department (1983-1993). Jennifer's research explored the connections between environmental injustice, the built environment and public health.

We are proud to reprint Jennifer's dissertation abstract here:

Environmental injustice, public health and solid waste facilities in North Carolina

Community groups in North Carolina are concerned that solid waste facilities may be disproportionately located in non-white and low-wealth communities, that this represents an environmental injustice, and that solid waste facilities negatively impact the health of host communities. However, the relationship between environmental injustice and health has not been fully evaluated. A conceptual model was developed as a basis for exploring the relationships between environmental injustice, solid waste, and health. While this model includes health impacts associated with direct exposures to toxicants, the emphasis is on the indirect effects of solid waste facilities on health through their impacts on the built environment. This model was used to inform analyses that evaluated the prevalence and occurrence of solid waste facilities in non-white communities compared to white communities and low-wealth communities compared to high-wealth communities in North Carolina. Communities were defined as census block groups in order to obtain information on racial and economic characteristics. Information on solid waste facilities was obtained through a review of solid waste facility records maintained by the North Carolina Division of Waste Management. The results of these analyses suggest that on average in North Carolina, the prevalence of solid waste facilities in 2003 was greater in non-white communities (50% to 100% non-white) compared to white communities (<10% non-white) (adjusted prevalence odds ratio [adjPOR]: 2.8; 95% confidence interval [CI]: 1.9, 4.1); and low-wealth communities (median house values <\$60,000) compared to high-wealth communities (median house values ≥\$100,000) (adjPOR: 1.5; 95% CI: 0.9, 2.5). Among block groups that did not contain a previously permitted solid waste facility, the occurrence of solid waste facilities permitted between 1990-2003 was greater in non-white communities compared to white communities (adjusted hazard ratio: 2.7; 95% CI: 1.3, 5.7). Solid waste facilities present numerous public health concerns including potential for water contamination, traffic safety, malodors, and impacts on health promoting resources. As proposals to site additional solid waste facilities in North Carolina are discussed, these results should be considered to minimize the disproportionate impacts on non-white and low-wealth communities.

Dr. Norton expresses gratitude to her dissertation committee: Steve Wing (chair) (PhD, 1983), Jay Kaufman, Steve Marshall (PhD, 1998), Hester Lipscomb (Duke University) (PhD, 1995), and Altha Cravey (UNC Dept. of Geography). She can be contacted at nortonj@email.unc.edu.

Epi STUDENT NEWS



*Tania A. Desrosiers, PhD student
and Kimberly A. Porter, MSPH, PhD student
(Sidney Kark Award for Distinguished Teaching Assistant)*



*Sirin Yaemsiri, first year MSPH/PhD student
(Ibrahim Fellowship)*



*Dr. Adam Goode, first year PhD student
(Cornoni-Huntley Scholarship)*

Student Awards 2007



*Myduc Ta, PhD student
(Rebecca James Baker Scholarship; Dr. Jeffrey Baker, donor)*



*Daniel J. Westreich, PhD student
(Berton H. Kaplan Student Publication Award)
Westreich's article, "Survival in women exposed to single-dose nevirapine for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV: a stochastic model," published in *Journal of Infectious Diseases* [J Infect Dis. 2007 Mar 15;195(6):837-46. Epub 2007 Feb 7]. Frieda Behets, Annelies Van Rie, Joe Eron (Medicine), and Charlie Van der Horst (Medicine) were co-authors*

Staff Awards 2005-2007

2005

Spencer Gee (Staff Excellence Award)
Kimberly Ludwig, Lesa McPherson (Star Heel Award)

2006

Lesla McPherson (Staff Excellence Award)
Nancy Colvin, Chandra Caldwell (Star Heel Award)

2007

Phyllis Johnson (Staff Excellence Award)
Chandra Caldwell, Nancy Colvin, Spencer Gee, Tom Goodwin
(Star Heel Award)

Dedicated Epi Staff Support Department

The Department of Epidemiology is grateful for the long-term dedication of the following staff members, all of whom have at least 10 years of state service:

Janice Britso	Steve Hutton	Victor Rhodes
Nancy Colvin	Phyllis Johnson	Joanna Smith
Carolyn Cooke	Gail King	Jessica Tse
Thomas Goodwin	Lisa Lindesmith	Sue Wolf
Eileen Gregory	Lesla McPherson	Joy Wood
Dick Howard	Linda Morris	Carmen Woody
Terry Hudgins	Virginia Reid	Boyd Yount
David Hunt	(retired 1/1/08)	

Welcome New Staff Members (2005-2007)

Chyrise Bradley, project coordinator
Robert Brown, social/clinical research assistant
Brenda Clark, office assistant
Heather Davis, project coordinator
Sally Duffy, accounting technician
Sandra Duvall, project coordinator
Mike Garrison, accounting technician
Robert Goetze, applications technician
Matthew Herr, social/clinical research assistant
Elizabeth Kroll, social/clinical research assistant
Lisa Parrott, social/clinical research assistant
Isabelle Roger, research associate
Teresa Swezey, research associate
Gail VanMatre, research associate

News from Joyce Allen Student Services Manager (1976-1995)



Sometimes it comes over me that it's actually been quite a while since I retired from the department. Some of you will remember me; for the rest of you, I'm the former Nancy Colvin. I was there from 1976-1995, so I've had the great good luck to know a lot of amazing people as they came through the program and to see a lot of big-time history get made in the department. And there are live memories: the PhD defense featuring a Geiger counter that went berserk from the cinderblock walls in what was then our Rosenau conference room. And the meeting when Al Tyroler brought the news that red wine was a health food. And the department picnic in the early days of cholesterol research when the salad was a dish of shredded cabbage...period.

I went on from that day in 1995 to expand my teaching—currently I'm doing a number of non-credit writing classes, both at the Arts Center in Carrboro and in the continuing studies division of—well—that other university just up 15-501. I also coordinate a couple of writers' groups, and of course continue to write myself, with varying results. I also manage to get myself way overcommitted in other activities around and about. But I still feel connected with EPID, and the memories are fine ones. Even the cabbage. And I still have dreams—senior versions of those dreams where you forgot to study for the test—in which an EPID student asks me about some aspect of the program, and I find I've no idea any more what the answer is.

Team Epi-Aid conducts pre-hurricane assessment in Carteret County, North Carolina

(Continued from Page One)

Health Department and its partners, including Team Epi-Aid, conducted a pre-hurricane assessment of 251 residents on April 12-14, 2007. The purpose of the assessment was to determine the level of hurricane preparedness among area residents overall and in different flood zones.

Sophisticated sampling and implementation methods were applied. Census blocks were stratified into four categories by flood zone, or annual likelihood of flooding, using maps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Within each stratum, census blocks were selected by probability proportionate to size. Seven interview locations were randomly selected in each census block using ArcGIS software. Interview teams were routed to the randomly selected interview locations using handheld computers with GPS. Questionnaires developed by the Carteret County Health Department were implemented onsite and data were collected with the handheld computers. A total of 251 interviews were completed in 36 census blocks.

While 82 percent of those surveyed indicated that they were primarily responsible for their own food, water, and shelter for the three days following hurricane landfall, only 43 percent had a disaster supply kit. Fifty-one percent indicated that they had an evacuation plan for their household; of those with an evacuation plan, more than 85 percent with pets included them in their plans. Households with an evacuation plan were 68 percent more likely to have a supply kit. Eleven percent of survey respondents indicated a special need or health condition that would require special assistance during an evacuation. Only three individuals surveyed had registered for the county's evacuation assistance program, two of whom lived alone.

The results of the pre-hurricane assessment indicate some clear areas for strategic intervention by the local health department and emergency management officials, such as increasing the proportion of residents with a disaster supply kit. For some residents, cost may be a barrier to obtaining or creating a kit. Plans to build a disaster supply kit over a period of weeks, such as those suggested by the American Red Cross, and partnerships with local merchants to offer disaster supply kit supplies at reduced prices, could increase the number of residents with kits.

Written by Meredith Anderson, research associate epidemiologist at the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness, and Jen Horney, assistant director of the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness and PhD student in epidemiology. For more information about TEA, contact mlanders@email.unc.edu.



Christine Leistner (Ohio University) and Christa Tomc (Notre Dame University), two members of an 18-person research team, check containers for mosquito breeding in a community near Tena, Ecuadorian Amazon, during a research trip sponsored by the Tropical Disease Institute of Ohio University in July 2007.

Discovering the challenges of international field research

(Continued from Page One)

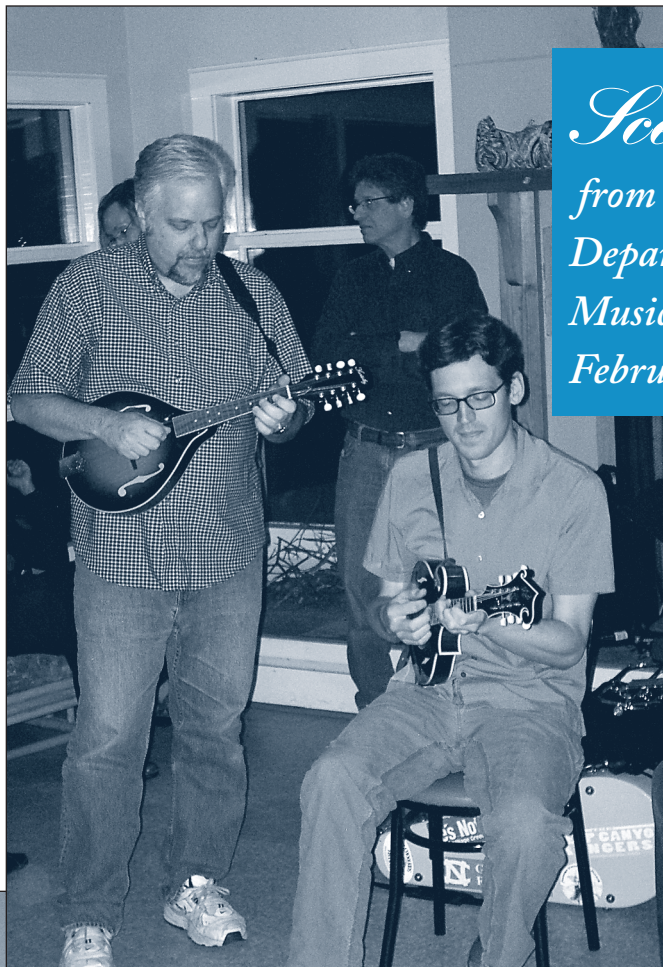
construction affected scheduled travel plans and made visits to certain communities impossible. Communication proved to be an issue as well. Though the research team included multiple fluent Spanish speakers, the language Quechua was more commonly used in some areas, leading to difficulties in the researchers' and participants' ability to understand each other. Further, obtaining unbiased responses from participants about perceived water quality was inadvertently compromised by community leaders whose introduction of the research team to residents was usually followed by a lecture about the severity of water contamination and mosquito-borne illness in the community.

Cultural nuances also played a role. The research team learned that Sundays were widely considered "drinking" days, and were therefore not suitable days to conduct in-home interviews. They also learned that it was not considered appropriate for one research team member to conduct an interview inside a home while other team members wandered unsupervised on the participant's property in search of mosquito or water source samples.

"Due to my participation in this research, I became more aware of the obstacles involved in starting up a new international field research project," says Brettania. The research team will return to Ecuador next summer and plans to improve the research design based on lessons learned this past summer. They hope to present results from their first round of data collection at a conference this fall.

Brettania Lopes is currently pursuing a PhD in epidemiology. She can be reached at lopes.blw@unc.edu.

Epi DEPARTMENT EVENT



*Scenes
from the
Department Winter
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February 2007*



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