



## BIOSTATISTICS SEMINARS

All seminars are held from 4PM – 5PM  
485 Lexington Ave, Conference Room B (2137)

- ❖ March 13, 2019 **Vijai Joseph**  
MSK
- ❖ March 20, 2019 **Irina Ostrovskaya**  
MSK
- ❖ April 3, 2019 **Kay See Tan**  
MSK

## EPIDEMIOLOGY SERVICE MEETINGS

485 Lexington Ave, Conference Room B (2137)  
Please see emails for updates

- ❖ February 25, 2019 **Sarah Ward**  
MSK
- ❖ March 11, 2019 **Helena Furberg-Barnes**  
MSK

## HEALTH OUTCOMES RESEARCH GROUP SEMINARS

All seminars are held from 12PM – 1PM  
485 Lexington Ave, Conference Room B (2137)

- ❖ March 8, 2019 **Aaron Mitchell**  
MSK
- ❖ March 22, 2019 **Gunjan Shah**  
MSK

## POPULATION SCIENCES RESEARCH PROGRAM SEMINAR SERIES

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM 1275 York Avenue, Room M-107

- ❖ February 25 2019 **Ed Giovannucci, MD, PhD**  
Harvard University
- ❖ March 12 2019 **Richard B. Hayes, DDS, MPH, PhD**  
NYU Langone Health
- ❖ April 16 2019 **Said Ibrahim, MD, MPH, MBA**  
Weill Cornell Medical Center

## OPEN POSITIONS

Please contact the manager for more information about open positions in our department.

- ❖ Assistant Research Biostatistician (Kathy Panageas)
- ❖ Data Analyst (Ling Chen)
- ❖ Data Software Analyst in Computational Oncology (Sohrab Shah)
- ❖ Editorial Project Coordinator (Shireen Lewis)
- ❖ Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Biostatistics (Li-Xuan Qin)
- ❖ Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Biostatistics (Mithat Gonen)
- ❖ Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Computational Oncology (Ed Reznik)
- ❖ Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Computational Oncology (Sohrab Shah)
- ❖ Regulatory Research Associate (Sharon Bayuga)
- ❖ Research Biostatistician (Anna Kaltenboeck)



DEPARTMENT  
CHAIR  
Colin Begg, PhD  
EDITORS  
Prusha Patel, MPH  
Narre Heon  
Lauren Rogak, MA  
Amethyst Saldia  
Yesenia Werner  
Shireen Lewis, MPA  
Joseph Kanik

## COLIN BEGG WINS THE 2019 ZELEN AWARD

**Colin Begg** has been chosen as the recipient of the 2019 Marvin Zelen Leadership Award in Statistical Science. The award recognizes an individual in government, industry, or academia, who by virtue of his/her outstanding leadership, has greatly impacted the theory and practice of statistical science. While individual accomplishments are considered, the most distinguishing criterion is the awardee's contribution to the creation of an environment in which statistical science and its applications have flourished.



Colin Begg, PhD

More information and past winners are here:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/biostatistics/zelenaward/>

## SARA OLSON RETIRES

**Sara Olson** has retired from the Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics after nearly 25 years at MSK. On January 18th the department celebrated Sara's retirement with her colleagues and family at the Rockefeller Research building. The delightful ceremony included touching speeches from colleagues, an original song played on guitar by Andrew Vickers, and the surprise arrival of her two children Dan and Lizzy who traveled from Colorado and Massachusetts, respectively, to join in the celebration of Sara's career.



Sara Olson, PhD

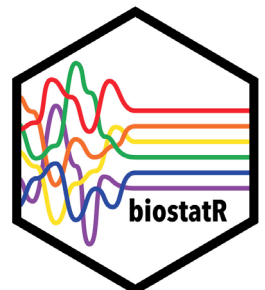
During her time at MSK Sara focused her research efforts on the environmental and genetic risk factors for rare cancers. She founded the Epidemiology of Endometrial Cancer Consortium (E2C2) and led the pancreatic cancer epidemiology study as part of the MSK Pancreatic Tumor Registry. In her research of glioma, she helped lead the MSK portion of the GLOGENE consortium and the Glioma International Case-Control Study. Over the course of her career at MSK, Sara has also mentored many individuals interested in epidemiology and cancer research.

We appreciate the years of service Sara has dedicated to the institution and wish her the very best in her retirement!

## WORKSHOP & THE RELEASE OF biostatR

The Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, in collaboration with the Department of Strategy & Innovation, hosted a two-day R Workshop on October 15-16. The workshop targeted new R users and current R users who wished to learn tidyverse R. Twenty-nine people attended and received a mix of instructional coursework through DataCamp and interactive work on a case study. **Emily Zabor**, **Dan Sjoberg**, and **Mike Curry** volunteered their time as instructors for the workshop.

The biostatR package was launched at the December R User Group meeting. The package was written by members of the Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, including **Dan Sjoberg**, **Emily Zabor**, **Margie Hannum**, **Esther Drill**, **Patrick Hilden**, and **Ryan Weber**, with the goal to make reporting of analytic results simple, beautiful, and reproducible. Publication-ready tables are created with minimal code, and can be exported to Word, HTML, and PDF documents with the use of R Markdown. The biostatR functions are flexible, allowing you to easily customize the aesthetics of tables to suit your needs. The package also includes functions to easily use the official MSK color palette to create beautiful plots. Check out the package website at <http://biostatR.mskcc.org> for examples and to get started. This is a collaborative endeavor, and we encourage everyone to get involved and contribute to the package.



## STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Alexia Iasonos has been appointed as Director: Clinical Research Development. This is a new position in the Biostatistics Service that will require her to serve as the liaison of the Biostatistics Service in institutional efforts regarding development, review and approval of clinical research protocols. This includes, in addition to facilitating the process of protocol review, engaging in development of best practices and guidelines as well as in educational efforts on protocol development.

Alexia's new position complements her recent elevation to Research Council co-chair. It is the first time that a biostatistician at MSK has been given this level of responsibility in the protocol review and approval process. This is not only an individual accomplishment that deserves to be congratulated but it also brings recognition to our discipline as a key component of clinical research.



## STAFF PROMOTIONS

- ❖ Jessica Flynn promoted to Data Analyst II
- ❖ Kelli O'Connell promoted to Research Biostatistician

## CYCLE FOR SURVIVAL HAPPY HOUR!



Come join Team Epi-BioCyclers for a fundraising Happy Hour!  
Thursday, February 28th  
The Public House  
5:30-8:30  
140 E 41st Street  
between Lexington and 3rd Ave  
\$20 suggested donation at the door.  
All donations go directly to Team Epi-Cyclers

## GRANTS

**Andrew Vickers** received a PSRP developmental grant for "Integrating SNPs and Biomarkers for Screening Healthy Men for Risk of Dying from Prostate Cancer."

**Kathy Panageas** also received a PSRP developmental grant for "Defining Supportive Care Needs of Patients with Erdheim-Chester Disease and their Caregivers."

**Elli Papaemmanuil** and **Sean Devlin** received a V Foundation grant for "Impact of oncologic therapy on Clonal Hematopoiesis and subsequent risk of developing therapy related leukemia in cancer survivors."

**Irina Ostrovnya** and **Venkat Seshan** received a P50 grant for "SPORE in Bladder Cancer (Biostatistics and Bioinformatics Core)."

**Ronglai Shen** and **Glenn Heller** received a P01 grant for "Targets for Therapy for Carcinomas of the Lung (Biostatistics and Bioinformatics Core)."

## PUBLICATIONS

**Jessica Lavery, Allison Lipitz-Snyderman, Diane Li, Peter Bach** and **Kathy Panageas** co-authored a paper, "**Identifying Cancer-Directed Surgeries in Medicare Claims: A Validation Study Using SEER-Medicare Data**", published in JCO Clinical Informatics. Despite pressure to provide high quality, cost-effective cancer care, few data sources have been validated to facilitate measurement of provider performance. Utilizing SEER-Medicare data, authors established that identifying patients who underwent a cancer-directed surgery from Medicare claims is feasible for many cancer sites, although careful consideration needs to be given to the validity of each site. Large-scale quality assessment of cancer surgery by disease site will allow patients to make informed decisions regarding where to pursue their care and providers to lead efforts to improve patient outcomes.

## SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE: CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Epi/Bio would like to set up a local task force here on the 2nd floor at 485 Lexington Avenue to work on sustainability initiatives. We are looking for staff volunteers to join the group and address issues such as computer shutdown, material exchange, recycling and any other ideas you have to reduce waste on the floor.

If you are interested in joining our team, please let **Shireen Lewis** or **Tricia Neary** know as we would like schedule a kick off meeting in the next few weeks.

## CYCLE FOR SURVIVAL

Our departmental team, the Epi-BioCyclers, will be participating in Cycle for Survival for the fourth consecutive year on Saturday, March 9th. The Epi-BioCyclers are asking for your support to help us reach our fundraising goals. We are hosting a happy hour on February 28th at The Public House (140 E. 41st Street) from 5:30-8:30! 100% of the money raised goes directly to MSK to fund research on rare cancers.



The link below will take you to our team fundraising page, where you can make a 100% tax-deductible online donation:

[http://mskcc.convio.net/site/TR/CycleforSurvival/CycleforSurvival?pg=team&fr\\_id=3231&team\\_id=64078](http://mskcc.convio.net/site/TR/CycleforSurvival/CycleforSurvival?pg=team&fr_id=3231&team_id=64078)

Epi-BioCyclers: Isidora Autuori, Cynthia Berry, Roxana Damian, Renee Gennarelli, Margaret Hannum, Jessica Lavery, Melissa Lavery, Shireen Lewis, Diane Li, Maha Mamoor, Axel Martin, Irene Orlow, Arfath Pasha, Lauren Rogak, Sohrab Shah, Samantha Vasquez, and Yesenia Werner.

## FOOD DRIVE

**BLAM** and **IHCD** are currently hosting their annual Food Drive in support of the Food to Overcome Outcomes Disparities (FOOD) Program, which provides free groceries to cancer patients who are struggling to afford food during their treatment. This began at MSK (pantry located at the Rockefeller Outpatient Pavilion on 53rd St) and has since expanded to several community hospitals.

The program accepts food donations [across MSK sites](#) and [monetary donations](#) as well.

It would truly be appreciated if you spread the word, both internally and externally, and consider contributing—the impact will be felt immediately, and tangibly, by our patients.



# New Staff

## NEW STAFF

### **Zeynep Atli, Graduate Research Assistant**

Zeynep has joined the department as a graduate research assistant. She will be in the department until September 2019. She is a PhD student in statistics at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Turkey. She will be working with Mithat Gonen on her research study about the Bayesian Approach for Joint Modelling of Longitudinal and Time to Event Data.



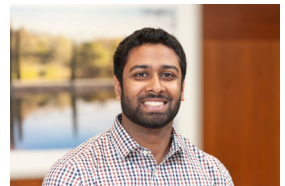
### **Viktorija (Viki) Bojilova, Bioinformatics Software Engineer**

Viki is a software engineer joining the Computational Oncology group. She will be working on the visualization team in Sohrab Shah's lab. Before joining MSK she worked at the BC Cancer Research Center in Vancouver, Canada.



### **Sankeerth Jinna, Research Project Associate**

Sankeerth joins the Health Outcomes Research Group as a research project associate. He previously worked as a project coordinator at Children's National Medical Center where he helped evaluate the relationship between mental health status and pediatric obesity. He holds an MPH in epidemiology from George Washington University and an MS in nutrition from Columbia University. He will be working with Talya Salz on testing a clinical informatics intervention for head and neck cancer survivors.



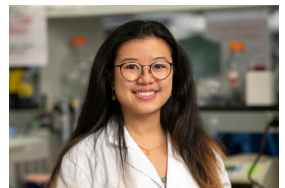
### **Minsoo Kim, Graduate Research Student**

Minsoo is a second-year PhD student in the Tri-Institutional Computational Biology & Medicine Program and is jointly advised by Sohrab Shah and Eduard Reznik. He is interested in inferring both the clonal evolution of cancer cells and the intratumoral heterogeneity through a combined means mitochondrial analysis and single cell sequencing. He holds a master's degree in bioinformatics and computational biology from the University of Minnesota and Mayo Clinic.



### **Jamie Lim, Research Assistant**

Jamie has joined the Computational Oncology group as a research assistant working with Sohrab Shah. Her research interests and expertise include the development of single-cell resolution methods and clinical assays for breast and gynecologic cancers. She previously worked as a technologist in BC Cancer and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in molecular biology and biochemistry with honors at Simon Fraser University.



### **Christine Lin, Data Analyst**

Christine graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Science in biometry & statistics in December 2018. She was previously an intern in the QSURE program for the 2018 summer, during which she worked with Malcolm Pike. Christine will continue to support the research efforts of Dr. Pike and his team in her new role.



### **Stephanie Lobaugh, Data Analyst II**

Stephanie joins us having previously worked as a research assistant at the University of North Carolina (UNC) Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. She graduated in 2018 from UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health with a master's degree in biostatistics. She will initially be working on projects in Radiation Oncology and Radiology.



### **Evelyn Vargas, Administrative Assistant**

Evelyn joins the Center for Health Policy and Outcomes Group & Drug Pricing Lab with over 20 years of administrative experience working in medical, legal and retail industries. She previously worked as an administrative assistant at Samaritan Daytop Village, a drug rehabilitation facility. She will be working with Peter Bach, Anna Kaltenboeck, Jen Chen and Jenn Ohn and the rest of the CHPO/DPL team.



### **Ignacio Vazquez-Garcia, Research Fellow**

Ignacio is a research fellow in Computational Oncology at MSK and Columbia University under the mentorship of Sohrab Shah and Simon Tavaré, respectively. He investigates the mechanisms of spatio-temporal tumour evolution, progression and therapy response. His research focuses on scalable inference and modelling of genomic, imaging and clinical data to derive predictive insights from multi-modal, high-dimensional datasets. He received his undergraduate degree in physics from Imperial College London and his PhD from the University of Cambridge.



### **Karissa Whiting, Assistant Research Biostatistician**

Karissa joins us as an assistant research biostatistician having previously worked as a data scientist at EcoHealth Alliance, where she helped develop tools and technologies to monitor emerging infectious diseases. She graduated in 2018 from the Mailman School of Public Health with a master's degree in biostatistics. Karissa will be supporting the research needs of investigators in the Biostatistics Service at MSK.



# HOLIDAY PARTY 2018

## HOLIDAY PLANNING COMMITTEE

We would like to acknowledge and say thank you to the Planning Committee for helping to orchestrate another fabulous Epi/Bio Holiday Party:

Farheen Ajmeri  
Nicole Benfante  
Cynthia Berry  
Roxana Damian  
Margie Hannum

Nicole Itzkowitz  
Joey Kanik  
Shireen Lewis  
Vincent Madonia  
Samantha Vasquez  
Yessie Werner

