



RECIPIENTS OF THE MSK SERVICE AWARDS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <u>40 Years</u>
Howard Thaler | <u>25 Years</u>
Colin Begg |
| <u>15 Years</u>
Mithat Gönen
Kathy Panageas
Andrew Vickers | <u>10 Years</u>
Jonine Bernstein
Shireen Lewis
Xiaolin Liang
Katherine Wong |
| <u>5 Years</u>
Ling Chen
Debra Goldman | Malcolm Pike
Mary Shaw
Youming Xu |

BIOSTATISTICS SEMINARS

All seminars are held from 4PM – 5PM 3rd floor conference room (307 E. 63rd St)

- ❖ January 21, 2015 Andrew Gelman
Columbia University
- ❖ January 28, 2015 Jaya Satagopan
MSK
- ❖ February 4, 2015 Marinela Capanu
MSK
- ❖ February 11, 2015 Mithat Gönen
MSK
- ❖ February 18, 2015 Soren Bentzen
University of Maryland
- ❖ February 25, 2015 Veera Baladandayuthapani
MD Anderson

HEALTH OUTCOMES RESEARCH GROUP SEMINARS

All seminars are held from 12PM – 1PM
BAIC 300 E. 66th St. 9th floor - Room 917B

- ❖ February 13, 2015 Thomas Atkinson
MSK
- ❖ February 27, 2015 Victoria Blinder
MSK

SURVIVORSHIP, OUTCOMES AND RESEARCH SEMINARS

- ❖ January 13, 2015 Marsha Regenstein, PhD
4:00pm – 5:00pm
1275 York Ave, M-107
Professor
Dept of Health Policy,
The George Washington
University
- ❖ February 3, 2015 Douglas Corley, MD, PhD
2:00pm – 3:00pm
430 East 67th Street, RRL-116
Gastroenterologist
Kaiser Permanente
San Francisco
Medical Center
Research Scientist III
Kaiser Permanente
Division of Research

PROMOTIONS

- Peter Bach: Director, Center for Health Policy and Outcomes
- Patrick Hilden: Research Biostatistician
- Anjali Jotwani: Research Study Asst II
- Kelsey Laning: Research Secretary II
- Val Pocus: Research Study Specialist
- Angie Santiago-Zayas: Research Study Asst II
- Ranjit Sukhu: Programmer Analyst



DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Colin Begg, PhD

EDITORS

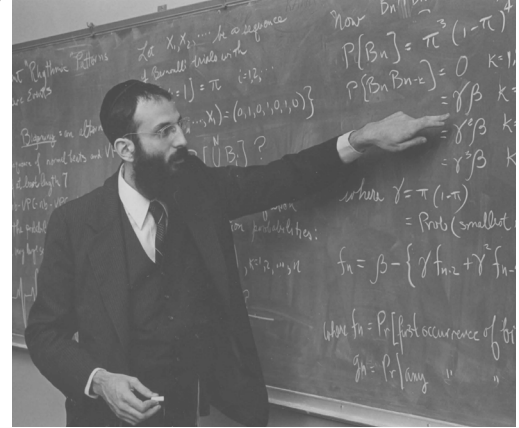
- Sharon Bayuga, MPH
- Prusha Patel, MPH
- Narre Heon
- Lauren Rogak, MA
- Mary Shaw
- Zahra Waliji, MA, MPH
- Shireen Lewis, MPA
- Joseph Kanik

HIGHLIGHT

Howard T. Thaler, PhD, recently reached a milestone of 40 years as an active member of the Biostatistics Service at MSK. After receiving a PhD in Statistics at SUNY/Buffalo under the mentorship of Marvin Zelen and Manny Parzen, in October 1974 he joined as the seventh person in the Biostatistics Laboratory of Sloan-Kettering Institute, which had been started recently by Valerie Mike.

A glimpse at the early years: At first, the Biostat Lab occupied several rooms in the southeast corner of the sixth floor of the Ewing Pavilion (later renamed Schwartz Hall and renumbered as the seventh floor). Computing was done via 300-baud telephone dial-up connection to NYU's Courant Institute "super-computers." Boxes of punch-cards with data were occasionally sent downtown, or first transferred to reels of magnetic tape.

Statisticians telephoned the computer operator to find out when and if a submitted job ran successfully and a courier service was called to bring back stacks of printout. Computers could "go down" for hours or days at a time. Statistical software included SPSS and BMDP or FORTRAN programs, as SAS and S (predecessor of R) were not yet developed. Basically, it was a "Do it yourself" era. No PC, Windows, word processor, spreadsheet, precision graphics, Internet, high speed cable, e-mail, voice-mail, mobile phone, scanner, high speed / high resolution printer, copier or fax, array of fonts, etc., etc.



Howard T. Thaler, PhD

Gradually, the staff and the clientele expanded and diversified, and computation, technology and methodology advanced. As Memorial Hospital merged with SKI in the early 80's to form MSKCC, primary appointments shifted to MH. In the mid-80's Biostatistics merged with Epidemiology. It is an understatement that there has been tremendous growth since then, especially over the 25 years of Colin Begg's vision and leadership.

During Dr. Thaler's sojourn, and especially during the period when he headed the Biostatistics Consultation Service and the Biostatistics Core of several Program Projects, he has collaborated on a very wide range of studies with clinicians, researchers and administrators throughout the Center. He plans to retire from MSK on July 1.

FUNDING SUCCESS

Helena Furberg-Barnes received an ACS Research Scholar Award for her study on post-diagnosis smoking and bladder cancer recurrence risk. This 4-year study will investigate the impact of post-diagnosis smoking on non-muscle invasive bladder cancer (NMIBC) recurrence, and response to intravesical therapy. Post-diagnosis smoking exposure will be verified biochemically by testing patient saliva for cotinine. The study will identify factors associated with continued smoking so that these patients can be targeted for smoking cessation interventions. Co-Investigators are Jamie Ostroff, Bernard Bochner, Irene Orlow, and Emily Zabor.

She also received the V Foundation for Cancer Research Award for her study on pharmacogenetics of advanced bladder cancer treatment response and toxicity. This funding will allow for the first agnostic search for germline genetic variants that influence treatment response and vascular thromboembolic events (VTEs) among advanced bladder cancer patients treated with platinum-based chemotherapy. Co-PI is Vijai Joseph. Co-Investigators are Dean Bajorin, Ken Offit, Jonathan Rosenberg, Bernard Bochner, and Irina Ostrovnya.



Helena Furberg-Barnes, PhD

PUBLICATIONS

[“Identification of Rare Causal Variants in Sequence-Based Studies: Methods and Applications to VPS13B, a Gene Involved in Cohen Syndrome and Autism”](#)

[Marinela Capanu](#) was a co-first author on this paper which is in press in PLOS Genetics. The paper describes two complementary methods, a backward elimination procedure and a hierarchical modeling approach. They can be used together to incorporate prior information on the putative function of individual variants in a gene in order to identify a list of likely causal variants, and estimate the effects of these variants on disease.

STAFF RECOGNITION

WECARE Meeting

[Dr. Jonine Bernstein](#) hosted the semi-annual WECARE Study meeting on 12/3-12/4 at the NY Academy of Medicine. Twenty-four MSK staff, faculty, and external collaborators attended the study group in person, and others via webinar. With [Meg Woods](#) supervising the entire effort, she and [Kelsey Laning](#) were instrumental in making sure the meeting was a success from the initial planning stages to providing on-site logistics and support during the meeting. We would also like to say thank you to [Farheen Ajmeri](#), [Melissa Budnick](#), [Joe Christoff](#) and [Zahra Waliji](#) who greatly assisted in compiling the meeting materials. It was a great team effort, the meeting was a large success, and everyone appreciated how smoothly it ran.

SOAR Grant Applications

Several of the Epi/Bio Investigators recently submitted applications for the SOAR grant submissions. Thank you to all the staff on the Grants Team ([Joe Christoff](#), [Katherine Wong](#), [Brad Cohen](#), [Kelsey Laning](#) and [Melissa Budnick](#)) who worked diligently to submit multiple applications on behalf of the Department.

Windows 7 Upgrade

The department thanks [Joey Kanik](#) for all of his hard work and support during the Windows 7 system upgrade.

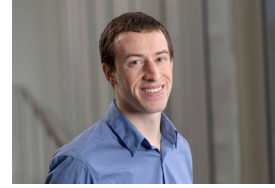
FOOD DRIVE

The annual departmental holiday food drive successfully raised \$2,551. This is the equivalent of 12,755 meals. Thank you to all who contributed towards this cause.

NEW STAFF

Matt Black, Data Analyst

Matt has joined Andrew Vickers' team. He graduated from the University of Maryland in 2013 with a degree in bioengineering and has worked as a research assistant at the Children's National Medical Center. Matt's principal responsibility will be writing software with the Webcore team and overseeing clinical implementation of Webcore software.



Pamela Nunes, Research Study Assistant

Since graduating from Rutgers University in 2012, Pam spent the last two years in Nampula, Mozambique, for the US Peace Corps. She worked as a Secondary Education Chemistry Teacher. She will be spending most of her time recruiting participants for the Pancreatic Tumor Registry. Pam will be working with Sara Olson, Amethyst Saldia and other members of the pancreas research team.



Heta Parmar, Research Technician

Heta Parmar obtained an MS in Biotechnology from NYU, in May 2012. Prior to joining MSK, she worked at Colgate Palmolive, Technology Center. Heta is very excited to join the Molecular Epidemiology team. She will be responsible for two melanoma projects. Additional responsibilities will include handling specimens, characterizing nucleic acids, and maintenance of biorepositories and laboratory equipment.



HOLIDAY PARTY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thank you to members of the Planning Committee in making this year's holiday party fabulous!

Shireen Lewis, Yasmeen Majoka, Melissa Budnick, Kelsey Laning, Farheen Ajmeri, Lauren Rogak, Narre Heon, Prusha Patel, Val Pocus, Allison Snyderman, Debra Goldman

