

NOTABLE NEWS //

DR. LEWIS KULLER RECIPIENT OF AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION JOHN SNOW AWARD

Schools of Health Sciences Media Relations
November 17, 2014

Dr. Lewis Kuller, professor emeritus of epidemiology, was chosen by the Awards Committee of the Epidemiology Section of the American Public Health Association (APHA) to receive the John Snow Award. This award, one of the oldest in the field, is given in recognition of enduring contributions to public health through epidemiologic methods and practice. His research and leadership in the profession are examples of the ideals embodied in the award and in its many previous awardees. The awards ceremony was held at the annual APHA meeting in November. »



Dr. Lewis Kuller

SPECIAL SEMINAR: PERSPECTIVES ON EBOLA

On December 5, a Special Seminar ‘Perspectives on Ebola’ was offered at Pitt Public Health. Dr. Amy Hartman, assistant professor, infectious diseases and microbiology explained the features of the virus that make it so deadly. Dr. John Grefenstette, senior scientist, Public Health Dynamics Laboratory, described how dynamic modeling has predicted spread within Africa and elsewhere in the world and demonstrates the importance of focusing epidemic control efforts in Africa. Dr. Kristen Mertz, medical epidemiologist, Allegheny County Health Department and adjunct assistant professor of epidemiology, provided an overview of the public health efforts in the United States that have halted spread of the disease. Dr. Carlene Muto, associate professor of medicine and epidemiology and Medical Director for Infection Control Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation, UPMC Health system reported on the extensive infection control programs put in place in the health care system. These outstanding presentations provided great hope that this most recent global medical crisis can and will be controlled. »



health care worker in protective gear

PITT PUBLIC HEALTH FINDS ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AIR TOXICS AND CHILDHOOD AUTISM

Pittsburgh Post Gazette
October 23, 2014

According to preliminary results of a Pitt Public Health Study, children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) were more likely to have been exposed to higher levels of certain air toxics during their mothers’ pregnancies and their first two years of life compared with children without the condition. Dr. Evelyn Talbott, a Pitt Public Health professor of epidemiology, and her team including Dr. Vincent Arena, associate professor of biostatistics and Dr. Lu Ann Brink, adjunct assistant professor of epidemiology and Chief Epidemiologist at the Allegheny County Health Department, interviewed families of children with ASD and compared the findings with information from two separate sets of comparison families of children without ASD born during the same time period in the six-county area. The children were born between 2005 and 2009 and lived in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Washington and Westmoreland counties. The Heinz Endowments funded this research and the story was picked up by many media outlets. »



Dr. Evelyn Talbott

NOTABLE NEWS : CONTINUED //

Dr. Jian Min Yuan

DR. JIAN MIN YUAN AWARDED \$4.2 MILLION TO CONTINUE CANCER STUDIES

Schools of Health Sciences Media Relations
October 6, 2014

Dr. Yuan, a professor of epidemiology at Pitt Public Health and the new Arnold Palmer Endowed Chair in Cancer Prevention, will use a \$4.2 million grant from the National Cancer Institute to continue studies that have already yielded important findings about the causes and prevention of cancer, Pitt said in a news release.

Dr. Yuan and other researchers are studying how genetics and environmental and lifestyle factors affect cancer in more than 81,000 Chinese men and women.

“We anticipate that the two Asian study groups will become even more scientifically valuable over the next five years as the younger members of these groups get older and have a greater risk of developing cancer,” Dr. Yuan said in a prepared statement. »

INTERNATIONAL TEAM REVEALS BARRIERS TO PUBLIC HEALTH DATA-SHARING; PROPOSES LIFE-SAVING SOLUTIONS

Schools of Health Sciences Media Relations
November 24, 2014

An analysis led by Pitt Public Health shows that barriers to the sharing of public health data hamper decision-making efforts on local, national and global levels. Published in the journal BMC Public Health and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the NIH, classifies and examines the barriers in order to open a focused international dialogue on solutions. Lead author is Dr. Willem G. van Panhuis, assistant professor of epidemiology and senior author is Dr. Donald S. Burke, Pitt Public Health dean and UPMC-Jonas Salk Chair of Global Health. »



Dr. Willem van Panhuis



Dr. Samar El Khoudary

RACE AND ETHNICITY IMPORTANT WHEN EVALUATING RISK OF FAT AROUND THE HEART

Schools of Health Sciences Media Relations
September 9, 2014

The findings, published online September 9th in the International Journal of Obesity, indicate that it may be useful to take racial and ethnic differences into account when designing programs to reduce obesity because what works for one man might not be as beneficial for another. This analysis was funded in part by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Lead author, Dr. Samar R. El Khoudary, assistant professor in Pitt Public Health’s department of epidemiology, is quoted in the newsletter of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health. Other Pitt Public Health faculty include study principal investigator Dr. Akira Sekikawa, Dr. Emma Berinas-Mitchell, Dr. Aiman El-Saed, Dr. Rhobert W. Evans, and Dr. Lewis H. Kuller. »

NOTABLE NEWS : CONTINUED //**PITT JOINS TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY
“DREAM TEAM”**

Pittsburgh Post Gazette
October 1, 2014

The University has announced that it will receive \$2.2 million from the \$17 million Traumatic Brain Injury [TBI] Endpoints Development award, or TED, funded through the U.S. Department of Defense, with the University of California San Francisco leading the project. “If we can more accurately identify and quantify these injuries, we will be better able to select appropriate patients for clinical trials and evaluate the success or failure of our therapies,” said Dr. Stephen R. Wisniewski, senior associate dean and co-director of the Epidemiology Data Center at the Pitt Graduate School of Public Health. »



Dr. Stephen Wisniewski

**MODEL TO IMPROVE DIABETES MANAGEMENT
WELL-RECEIVED BY PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS**

Schools of Health Sciences Media Relations
September 11, 2014

Nurses certified in diabetes education can be integrated successfully into primary care physician offices in an effort to improve the health of people with diabetes, according to a University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health evaluation funded by the American Diabetes Association. “The vast majority of people with diabetes are seen by primary care physicians who have increasingly limited time to address the complexities of each patient’s care,” said Janice Zgibor, Ph.D., R.Ph., associate professor of epidemiology at Pitt Public Health. “A new model of care is necessary to best treat the growing number of people with diabetes.” »



Dr. Janice Zgibor

DR. MARIA TRENT DELIVERS EPIDEMIOLOGY SEMINAR //

Dr. Maria Trent, associate professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine & the Bloomberg School of Public Health, visited Pitt Public Health to deliver a fall seminar “Sexual Health & Adolescent Girls: A Vulnerable Population for Public Health Intervention” based on her research. Dr. Trent, a pediatrician, credits a chance meeting and later collaboration with Pitt Public Health associate professor of epidemiology, Dr. Catherine Haggerty and the support and of Dr. Roberta Ness, former chair of the Pitt Public Health department of epidemiology, with helping to move her work forward. She says, “collaboration is what helps you to see the work others are doing and to be able to work together to come up

“collaboration is what helps you to see the work others are doing and to be able to work together to come up with solutions ...”

with solutions. That is what saves you – these relationships, talking to others about your ideas and to come up with new and interesting things. Sometimes when you are busy doing administrative work it can interfere with your creativity and people don’t realize that even an academic environment where research is done it is a creative process and that you must have some space and time to think about the next steps.”



Dr. Maria Trent

**STUDENT CORNER :
IN HIS OWN WORDS //****DR. BENJAMIN ACOSTA , PHD STUDENT**

From 1997 to 2001 I was enrolled as a PhD student at Pitt Public Health.

As a medical doctor from Mexico with a specialty in epidemiology, there were two aspects of my graduate education that strengthened my skills: first was the faculty's high technical level and the second, my advisor, Dr. Ronald E. LaPorte. I learned from him that there are no impossible tasks; even a huge project like The Supercourse. I was part of the Supercourse's starter team. In 2001 I returned to Mexico because my scholarship ended.



Dr. Benjamin Acosta

In 2002, I moved to the Coordination of Public Health of the Mexican Institute of the Social Security (IMSS). I started the Health Surveys Area where I designed a national study to evaluate health prevention in the insured. The IMSS provides social security, including medical care, to 40% of the entire Mexican population. I led a team of epidemiologists, demographers and actuaries to design the study and had to remember many things I had learned in the GSPH classrooms.

The result was very successful; we created the National Survey of Coverage of the Health Integrated Programs for the IMSS which is a national cross sectional study. Until now, five such studies, including about 500,000 total participants have been done making the survey one of the largest of the IMSS and in the world. The results have supported some health modifications of preventive services.

I have a goal of completing the Ph.D degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 2015. My training at the University of Pittsburgh was very complete and it has given me the skills to stand out as an epidemiologist in Mexico. Currently, I am the Head of the Area of Strategic Information at the epidemiology headquarters of the IMSS as well as a teacher and researcher. My next project will be to carry out a national study to evaluate the epidemiology programs at Mexican schools.

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*The Mexican Institute of Social Security
has 1,502 first care level medical units
distributed across the country*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS //****AWARDS :****LEWIS KULLER**

Recipient of American Public Health Association John Snow Award

ANDREA ROSSO

*Selected for the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Health Sciences Section (HS) **Research Award** at the **GSA Annual Scientific Meeting 2014***

JIAN MIN YUAN

Named the Arnold Palmer Endowed Chair in Cancer Prevention

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS :**YONA CLOONAN**

Appointment as Assistant Professor

BALA GOUNDAPPA

Appointment as Research Assistant Professor

ALLISON KUIPERS

Appointment as Visiting Assistant Professor

BEDDA ROSARIO-RIVERA

Appointment as Assistant Professor

ANDREA ROSSO

Appointment as Visiting Assistant Professor

FAINA LINKOV

Appointment as Associate Professor

MEHRAN MASSOUDI

Appointment as Adjunct Associate Professor

GRANTS :**STEVEN BELLE**

NEW NIH R01 – “Cross-Study Analysis of Coordinated Randomized Clinical Trials for Weight Management”

MARIA BROOKS

NEW Gilead Sciences, Inc. – “Diabetes and Coronary Artery Disease Trials Collaboration”

JIAN-MIN YUAN

NEW NIH UM1 – “Cancer epidemiology cohorts in Shanghai and Singapore”