

Notable News

CURA ZIKA SYMPOSIUM

This symposium, on May 5, marked the launch of Cura Zika, an international alliance of Pitt biomedical scientists and their Brazilian collaborators to perform much-needed research addressing the Zika epidemic. Cura Zika builds on Pitt Public Health’s long-standing collaboration with FIOCRUZ, the most prominent science and technology health institution in Latin America. Dr. Donald Burke, dean, Pitt Public Health and Dr. Jennifer Adibi, assistant professor of epidemiology, participated in the Cura Zika Symposium, which was live-streamed for those unable to attend in person. Cura Zika—which means “Cure Zika” in both Portuguese and Spanish—will provide quick-access funding to scientists performing time-sensitive research on the virus. This support is designed to move early stage innovative research ideas into larger studies in an accelerated manner.

ZIKA AND THE PLACENTA

Dr. Jennifer Adibi is the lead author of an important review piece ‘Teratogenic effects of the Zika virus and the role of the placenta’ which was published online in The Lancet on March 4. *read more on The Lancet online at bit.ly/1PoInkZ*



USE OF LINKED DATA TO INVESTIGATE OPIOID-RELATED HOSPITALIZATIONS AND MORTALITY IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Department of Epidemiology team headed by Drs. Thomas Songer and Evelyn Talbott are collaborating with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) to conduct the first ever investigation of hospitalizations of opioid overdose/abuse that are also linked to causes of death for individuals within Pennsylvania for 2000-2011. The team of investigators also includes Michelle Mellers, MPH, doctoral student as well as Judith Rager, MPH, senior research analyst in the Department. Dr. Marshall Ma, is an epidemiologist and co- principal investigator at the PADOH. The group will be conducting the first study to track individuals from the first hospitalization due to an opioids overdose to subsequent hospitalizations and possible death. By using a linked dataset from the Pennsylvania health department, the study will track individual trajectories related to opioid abuse. Funding has been provided through Dr. Donald Burke, Dean of Pitt Public Health.

*Notable News continued***DEPARTMENT ALUMNI RECOGNIZED: 2016 PUBLIC HEALTH ALUMNI AWARDS**

“It is a pleasure to recognize the dedicated work of some of our distinguished alumni,” said Donald S. Burke, M.D., Pitt Public Health dean and UPMC-Jonas Salk chair of global health of this year’s Pitt Public Health Alumni award winners. “Each in varying stages of their careers, these alumni represent the outstanding performance in public health teaching, research and community service that we all strive to achieve.” The award ceremony took place on May 21 at which time the following alumni received awards:

Mehran Massoudi, Ph.D., M.P.H., Class of 1992 and 1993, who received the Distinguished Alumni Award for Practice in recognition of his extensive contributions to improving the application of research to training the public health workforce. Dr. Massoudi is a captain in the U.S. Public Health Service, and is the branch chief for the Applied Research and Translation Branch and director of the Prevention Research Centers program at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Beyond his regularly assigned duties, he has completed five international deployments for the CDC and the World Health Organization.



Dr. Mehran Massoudi

Janice Dorman, Ph.D., M.S.Hyg., Class of 1981 and 1983, who received the Distinguished Alumni Award for Teaching and Dissemination in recognition of her work teaching graduate and undergraduate courses for 29 years, primarily in molecular epidemiology and genetics. She also teaches nursing students and has taught courses at the University of Michigan, in Buenos Aires and



Dr. Janice Dorman

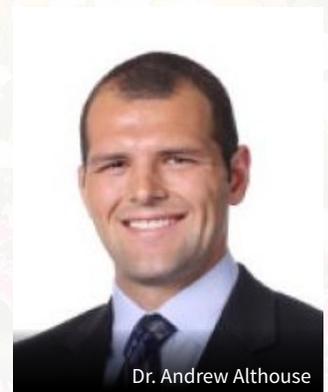
in Beijing. Dr. Dorman is a professor of health promotion and development at Pitt’s School of Nursing and holds secondary appointments at Pitt Public Health.

Rashida R. Dorsey, Ph.D., Class of 2006. She received the Early Career Excellence Award for her leadership in demographic data collection standards, data coordination and data collection strategy at the federal level, as well as data development on racial and ethnic minorities and other vulnerable populations, minority health and disparities—including developing, monitoring and evaluating strategic plans for racial/ethnic populations. She serves as director of data policy within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and also serves as a senior advisor on minority health and health disparities.



Dr. Rashida Dorsey

In addition, Andrew Althouse, Ph.D., Class of 2013 was inducted into Delta Omega, an honorary society that recognized merit and encourages further excellence in, and devotion to, public health work. Presently, he is a Biostatistician at Magee-Women’s Research Institute and a Research Instructor at the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Services.



Dr. Andrew Althouse

We congratulate all of the honorees on their outstanding contributions to the field of public health.

Notable News continued**FAREWELL TO DR. KAYE KRAMER**

After working in the department for over thirty years, Dr. M. Kaye Kramer has resigned to pursue opportunities in the private sector. The department bid farewell at a reception, in her honor, on May 26. Dr. Kramer is a Registered Nurse, having received her BS from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She went on to earn graduate degrees from Pitt, first an MPH in Community Health Services and in 2007, a DrPH in Epidemiology. Kaye is an Assistant Professor of Public Health Practice in the department and presently is the Director of the Diabetes Prevention Support Center of the University of Pittsburgh. The Center was established in 2006 and is one of the first in the country specifically developed to address the diabetes epidemic through evidence-based prevention intervention programs. She has received many honors and awards, most notably in 2014 the World Hypertension League Notable Achievement Award and in 2007 became a member of the Delta Omega National Honor Society and she serves on several national advisory boards and panels for diabetes educators. We wish her all the best as she embarks on new challenges.

OBESITY RAISES PRE- AND POST-NATAL DANGERS TO MOM AND BABY

Dr. Lisa Bodnar was featured in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's recent series on infant mortality regarding her research on the effects of women reaching a healthy weight before becoming pregnant, and gaining the appropriate number of pounds during pregnancy, in reducing the chance of infant mortality before his or her first birthday. She stated that a greater effort to improve community-wide health is needed, 'We have to consider what different populations value and find common ground ... enough work has been done in non-pregnant people that we know that if we can change our environment, we can improve our health and weight Not enough towns and cities are making that investment ... making sure there are walking neighborhoods, healthy foods are available We have to care about it; I'm not sure enough people care about it.' *see the article from the Post-Gazette at bit.ly/1Sw3S3s*



*Notable News continued***REMOTE CONTROL: IS TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME BAD FOR HEALTH?**

Dr. Tony Fabio's analysis of data from the Coronary Artery Development in Young Adults (CARDIA) was featured in the Winter 2016 issue of Pitt Magazine. In looking at adults' self-reported TV viewing habits, along with body mass index and waist circumference measurements, he discovered that more hours spent in front of the television per day at approximately age 30 resulted in a greater likelihood of obesity five years later, compared with participants who had less TV time at the same age. *see the full article in Pitt Magazine at bit.ly/1sC4qzO*



Dr. Anthony Fabio



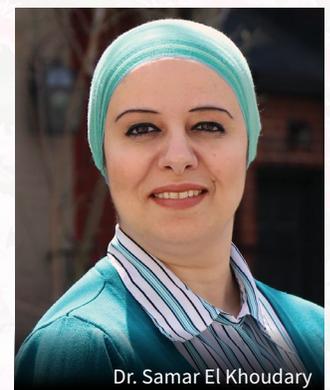
Dr. Wendy King

MOST PATIENTS LIKELY TO SEE REDUCTIONS IN PAIN AND DISABILITY AFTER BARIATRIC SURGERY

In the three years following bariatric surgery, the majority of patients experienced an improvement in pain and walking ability, as well as a lessening of the degree to which back or leg pain interfered with work, according to a Pitt Public Health -led analysis of the Longitudinal Assessment of Bariatric Surgery-2 (LABS-2) study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. "Our study found that clinically meaningful improvements in bodily pain, specific joint pain and physical function are common following bariatric surgery. In particular, walking is easier, which impacts patients' ability to adopt a more physically active lifestyle. However, some patients continue to have significant pain and disability," said lead author Dr. Wendy King, associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology at Pitt Public Health. "This data can help patients and clinicians develop realistic expectations regarding the impact of bariatric surgery on pain and disability." Dr. Steven Belle, professor of epidemiology and biostatistics is a co-author. *read more from the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences at bit.ly/20u0L3D*

PITT FINDING SUGGESTS NEW HEART DISEASE SCREENING TARGET FOR MIDDLE-AGED BLACK WOMEN

Middle-aged black women have higher levels of a protein in their blood associated with a predictor of heart disease than their white counterparts, even after other factors, such as obesity, are taken into consideration. "We clearly demonstrated that obesity, inflammation biomarkers and coronary artery calcification are linked for both black and white midlife women, further emphasizing the need to promote lifestyle changes to combat obesity at midlife when women are subjected to many physiological and biological changes that could potentially increase their risk for heart disease," said senior author Dr. Samar El Khoudary, assistant professor of epidemiology. "Future research should build on our findings regarding black women and C-reactive protein by testing similar associations over time, which could potentially yield interventions that can help these women avoid developing heart disease." Additional co-authors include Dr. Karen Matthews, professor of epidemiology, and Dr. Emma Barinas-Mitchell assistant professor of epidemiology. *read more from My San Antonio online at bit.ly/1Ue7wDa*



Dr. Samar El Khoudary

Notable News continued

‘10 KEYS TO HEALTHY AGING’ FEATURED IN NEW PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE BLOG

The *Aging Edge*, a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette blog which made its debut in April, will provide a comprehensive guide to news, issues and resources affecting the older adults of Western Pennsylvania and their families and other caregivers. The ‘Staying Healthy’ section on the blog features the Center for Aging and Population Health’s (CAPH) ‘10 Keys to Healthy Aging’, which emphasizes that preventive medicine and lifestyle choices play big roles in maintaining health well into retirement years. Dr. Anne Newman is the Director of the CAPH. *visit the blog at post-gazette.com/aging-edge*



Dr. Lewis Kuller

HEALTHIER ARTERIES MAY LOWER DEMENTIA RISK IN OLD AGE

Elderly Americans whose arteries are clear of calcium buildup appear less likely than others to suffer from heart disease or dementia, according to new research. These results suggest that aggressive prevention of elevated heart risk factors that lead to calcium buildup “could result not only in increased longevity and decreased heart attacks, but also substantial reduction of incidences of dementia, especially among older women,” said Dr. Lewis Kuller, an emeritus department of epidemiology professor, who led the research team. For the study, Kuller and colleagues collected data on more than 500 people who took part in a cardiovascular health-cognition (heart health and mental health) study. The participants, average age 80 at the start, were followed from 1998 through 2013. Co-authors from the department include Dr. Rachel Mackey, assistant professor of epidemiology Dr. Caterina Rosano, professor of epidemiology and Dr. Anne Newman department chair and professor of epidemiology.

read the full report from US News at bit.ly/1S2qnvB

UNLIKELY TOOLS IN FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

Watercress could be an unlikely weapon in the fight against smoking, experts have revealed. Taking the plant extract several times a day significantly inhibits the activation of a tobacco-derived carcinogen in smokers, a new study suggests. The findings also show how the extract detoxifies environmental carcinogens and toxicants found in cigarette smoke. Furthermore, researchers at the University of Pittsburgh say the effect is stronger in people who lack certain genes involved in processing carcinogens. Dr. Jian-Min Yuan, Arnold Palmer Endowed Chair in Cancer Prevention and a professor of epidemiology at Pitt Public Health, said, “Cigarette smokers are at far greater risk than the general public for developing lung cancer, and helping smokers quit should be our top cancer prevention priority in these people.” *see the full article on the Daily Mail online at dailym.ai/1WjLFvP*



Dr. Jian-Min Yuan

Student Corner

EMILY WASSON INCOMING MPH STUDENT

Emily Wasson, an incoming MPH student who will pursue a Master of Public Health degree in Epidemiology at Pitt Public Health this fall, details her decision to choose a public health career in the Gettysburg College newsletter. In addition to receiving her undergraduate degree in Biology, she worked at the Nemours A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children in Delaware on a research project to identify racial and/or ethnic disparities in pediatric populations. “As a result of this research opportunity, I saw that through research we can drive policy change that will ultimately impact populations,” she said. “I realized that if we want to make changes to how people make choices about their daily lives, it starts with research that then drives policy to ensure people can get access to care. Ultimately access to care is what’s preventing [people] from having the best health outcomes, specifically in the United States.” We welcome Emily to Pittsburgh and wish her well on her graduate education. *read more from Gettysburg College at bit.ly/1PoJYr0*



Appointments

DR. MARSHALL MA

Adjunct Assistant Professor

DR. KAREN NUNLEY

Visiting Research Assistant Professor

DR. RAVI SHARMA

Adjunct Assistant Professor

DR. JANICE ZGIBOR

Adjunct Associate Professor

Grants

DR. ANNE NEWMAN

Renewed NIH T32 *Training in the Epidemiology of Aging*

Honors & Awards

DR. KAREN NUNLEY

Fellowship Award, Disease Drivers of Aging
2016 Advances in Geroscience Summit

DR. ANNE NEWMAN

accepted as a member of the Association of American
Physicians (AAP) and was inducted in April 2016.

DR. TREVOR ORCHARD

delivered the 2016 Kenny/Drash Lecture at the
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh/UPMC on April 7

DR. LISA BODNAR

to serve as a member of the Pregnancy Working Group,
part of the US Department of Agriculture- Health and
Human Services Foundational Review Project on Diet
and Health for Pregnancy and Birth to 24 Months

LORI SMITH

*STUDENT AFFAIRS MANAGER &
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY*

chairs the Provost Advisory Committee on Women's
Concerns (PACWC), a new initiative for highlighting
the accomplishments of female student, staff, and
faculty leaders across the University. She presented
to the Provost on April 18 in an effort to spotlight
women's leadership at Pitt and to propose a
connection with mentoring programs on campus.

Staff Recognition

The following staff members were recognized for their years
of service on Thursday June 9, 2016

DARLENE BUFFINGTON

ANNA SANGL

DONNA STOLIKER

5 years

LORI CIMINO

SHELLEY FERSON

RACHEL MILLER

10 years

CATHERINE BENCHOFF

DAVID CARR

CHERYL NEWMAN

ANGELA PATTISON

20 years

SUSAN JANISZEWSKI

LAURIE SILFIES

30 years

Dean's Day Departmental Awards

DANA JORGENSEN

GRETCHEN WHITE

YA-HUI YU

Doctoral category

YISI WANG

Master's category

Dean's Day School-Level Award

PALLAVI JONNALAGADDA

Doctoral category, second place

Sixth Annual Health Disparities Poster Competition

ETHAN BLUM

Master's Level

Submit News to the Epidemiology Newsletter

If you have a story, award or other milestone you would like to share, please email Frani Averbach at averbachf@edc.pitt.edu with your submission.

