



- 2 UPCOMING PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS
- 6 IN THE NEWS
- 7 NEW RELEASES
- 8 BRIEF MENTIONS
- 9 AWARDS & GRANTS
- 10 PROFILES
- 13 CONTAGION
- 24 FACULTY ARTICLE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Careers in Epidemiology, Page 16

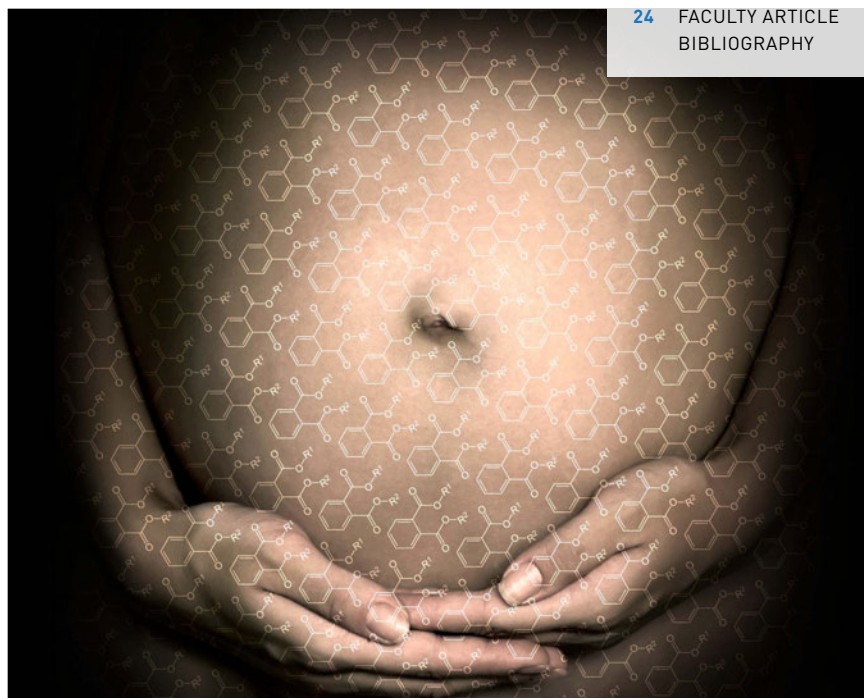
New study links prenatal phthalates exposure to impaired development in infants

A woman's exposure during pregnancy to phthalates—endocrine-disrupting chemicals used in common household items like plastic toys and shampoos—increases the risk of her child developing mental, behavioral, and motor problems in infancy, according to a new study that was senior authored by Dr. Pam Factor-Litvak, Associate Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, and first authored by Dr. Robin Whyatt, Professor of Clinical Environmental Health Sciences, with colleagues at the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health.

The results, published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*, add to growing concern about the impact of phthalates on child development. Recent studies of school-age children have found preliminary links between developmental problems and prenatal exposure, but Drs. Whyatt and Factor-Litvak's investigation is the first to examine prevalence in children as young as 3-years-old.

Phthalates are easily released into the environment and leached into food. The mechanism by which they interact with the brain is not yet known, but growing evidence suggests that the chemicals impact the function of the thyroid gland and lower the production of testosterone—both mechanisms that play critical roles in brain development.

The researchers followed the children of 319 non-smoking inner-city women who gave birth between 1999 and 2006. They measured phthalate levels in women's urine and looked at the association between those levels and tests of the child's performance



on mental and motor development tests and the mother's assessment of the child's behavior.

The study was designed to reflect the wide variation in phthalate exposure across the US population.

"The results are concerning since increasing exposures from the lowest 25% to the highest 25% among the women in our study was associated with a doubling or tripling in the odds of motor and/or behavioral problems in the children," says Dr. Factor-Litvak. "However, the number of children with clinical disorders was small."

The study was conducted in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, supported by a grant from National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Phthalates
are easily
released into the
environment and
leached into food

Whyatt RM, Liu X, Rauh VA, Calafat AM, Just AC, Hoepner L, Diaz D, Quinn J, Adibi J, Perera FP, Factor-Litvak P. Maternal Prenatal Urinary Phthalate Metabolite Concentrations and Child Mental, Psychomotor and Behavioral Development at Age Three Years. *Environ Health Perspect*. 2011 Sep 6. [Epub ahead of print]



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the October 2011 issue of Two by Two, the Epidemiology Department newsletter. Faculty, students, and staff have settled into the fall semester in earnest, and the October issue gives us an opportunity to present the milestones and achievements that have accrued since summer, including a plethora of recent faculty honors, a book launch, and a major theatrical release.

Our special feature in this issue is **Careers in Epidemiology**. Designed as a guide to Epidemiology trainees contemplating the next step in their public health trajectory, the **Careers** section features a snapshot of job placements of recent Epidemiology graduates and an overview of the resources available through the Mailman Office of Careers Services (OCS). Advice from Assistant Dean and OCS Director Ms. Tanya Cobbs Leslie as well as a current Epi student and recent graduates should be particularly helpful. Our interviews with Department alumni who occupy prominent positions in academia, health departments and government, industry, and non-profit provide a broad sampling of the avenues our graduates can and do pursue.

September 2011 provided an opportunity for us to contemplate the events of another September ten years ago. A recap of a conference co-sponsored by the Department on September 8, *9/11+10. Science Policy and Public Health: Looking Forward to the Next Ten Years* appears in this issue, along with a selection of faculty publications around the health impacts of terrorism and disasters.

As always, I thank the faculty, students, and administrators who made this newsletter possible, and invite your comments and ideas for future issues.

Warm regards,

SUBMIT TO TWO BY TWO

If you have a study, news story, award, or other milestone you'd like to share in Two by Two, please email Elaine Meyer at em2642@columbia.edu with your submission.

UPCOMING OCTOBER — DECEMBER

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5	MASTER'S STUDENTS POSTER PREP: CAROLYN GREEN AND CATHERINE RICHARDS
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5	BOOK PARTY: A PLAGUE OF PRISONS: THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF MASS INCARCERATION IN AMERICA BY ERNEST DRUCKER, PhD
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14	FACULTY MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26	CUEGR: GARY GIOVINO, PhD
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28	DEPARTMENT SEMINAR: MASTER'S STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28	EPI SOCIAL: STUDENT-FACULTY MIXER FOLLOWING THE MASTER'S STUDENT POSTER SESSION
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11	DEPARTMENT SEMINAR: LISA BATES, PhD
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18	FACULTY MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28	SPECIAL LECTURE: KATHERINE KEYES, PhD
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30	CUEGR - HOWE LECTURE: LESLIE BERNSTEIN, PhD
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7	CUEGR: PAOLO VINEIS, MD, MPH, FFPH
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15	HOLIDAY PARTY
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16	FACULTY MEETING

CLUSTER SEMINARS OCTOBER — DECEMBER

SOCIAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26 10:00-11:30 AM

PSYCH / NEURO EPIDEMIOLOGY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6 1:30-2:30 PM

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7 (SPECIAL SEMINAR) 3:00-4:00 PM

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10 12:30-1:00 PM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1 12:30-1:30 PM

LIFECOURSE EPIDEMIOLOGY

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18 1:00-2:30 PM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 1:00-2:30 PM

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13 1:00-2:30 PM

EPIDEMIOLOGY INNOVATION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19 8:30-10:00 AM

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16 8:30-10:00 AM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21 8:30-10:00 AM

CHRONIC DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 12:00-1:00 PM

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11 12:00-1:00 PM

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9 12:00-1:00 PM

INFECTIOUS DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 3:00-4:30 PM

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9 3:00-4:30 PM



PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

A new era in treatment and prevention of AIDS

Articles by Department faculty about the use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) were featured in leading journals recent months. Several of our faculty have been at the forefront in testing forms of ART or using it in public health interventions.

The new era of HIV control

“Barely a year ago, visions of HIV control would have been considered far-fetched,” say Drs. Salim and Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology and Associate Professor of clinical Epidemiology, respectively, in a comment published in the *Lancet’s* special HIV/AIDS themed issue. The Drs. Abdool Karim, who directed the successful CAPRISA 004 tenofovir gel trial, describe in the article how the landscape of HIV/AIDS has been redefined by several successful trials that have shown HIV transmission is preventable through use of antiretrovirals. A full-on global commitment is now needed to back HIV control. “Anything less will crush the hope and promise that antiretroviral drugs can change the course of the HIV epidemic,” the husband and wife team say.

Abdool Karim SS, Abdool Karim Q. Antiretroviral prophylaxis: a defining moment in HIV control. *Lancet*. 2011 Jul 17. [Epub ahead of print]

Initiation of antiretroviral (HIV) treatment in sub-Saharan Africa often occurs too late to be of optimal benefit

In sub-Saharan Africa, many patients start ART later than recommended, decreasing their chances of survival and potentially limiting opportunities for prevention of HIV transmission to others. A new study by Department faculty Drs. Denis Nash, Wafaa El-Sadr, Batya Elul, and David Hoos in *AIDS* looked at 1,690 cohorts of patients from 267 clinics in 8 sub-Saharan African countries in an effort to understand the determinants of late ART initiation. The authors, who are also members of the International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (ICAP), demonstrate that clinics with large number of patients on ART and more comprehensive services are more successful at conducting HIV testing and linking HIV-infected persons to care earlier. An accompanying editorial by Dr. Sten H. Vermund, Director of the Institute for Global Health at Vanderbilt University, says of the study: “The ICAP team has set a new standard for evaluating programs with factors extending beyond these well-trod sociodemographic risk factors into both program-level and community-level (‘contextual’) elements.”

Nash D, Wu Y, Elul B, Hoos D, El Sadr W; for the International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs. Program-level and contextual-level determinants of low-median CD4+ cell count in cohorts of persons initiating ART in eight sub-Saharan African countries. *AIDS*. 2011;25(12): 1523-1533.



Women’s access to HIV prevention drugs must not be stymied

Continued antiretroviral drug placebo trials on women will unethically delay access to the drugs for those who are most at risk of contracting HIV, argues a new viewpoint article in the *Lancet* by Dr. Louise Kuhn, Professor of Epidemiology, and Dr. Zena Stein, Special Lecturer of Epidemiology Professor of Epidemiology Emeritus, along with Dr. Ida Susser of the City University of New York. Federal regulators are requiring more placebo trials before they will approve antiretrovirals for prophylactic use, but that position is “untenable” given the abundance of scientific evidence showing antiretrovirals reduce the rate of HIV transmission. Remaining concerns about the drug, such as how it should be administered, can be illuminated by study designs that make access easier for all. “[T]o delay implementation would cost the lives of the very women whom the drugs are intended to benefit,” the authors say.

Kuhn L, Susser I, Stein Z. Can further placebo-controlled trials of antiretroviral drugs to prevent sexual transmission of HIV be justified? *Lancet*. 2011; 378(9787): 285-7.

Antiretroviral therapy as prevention

In an editorial for the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Dr. Scott Hammer, Professor of Epidemiology, Chief of the Division of Infectious Disease at CUMC, and an investigator in the National Institutes of Health sponsored AIDS Clinical Trials Group and HIV Vaccine Trials Network, discusses the use of antiretroviral therapy for preventing HIV transmission, and recommends it as one of several important interventions.

“Antiretroviral therapy is by no means perfect and is not the ultimate answer to controlling and ending the HIV epidemic,” he says. “However, this is precisely the wrong time to limit access to antiretroviral therapy in resource-limited settings, since we have the tools in hand to maintain or restore health in infected persons and reduce transmission to their sexual partners.”

Hammer SM. Antiretroviral treatment as prevention. *N Engl J Med*. 2011; 365(6): 561-2.



Health consequences of 9/11 ten years later

Featured articles by Department faculty about the health affects of 9/11 10 years after the event

Scaled up disaster preparedness after 9/11

The September 11 attacks radically changed the disaster preparedness infrastructure of health departments' nationwide, says Dr. Isaac B. Weisfuse, Associate Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, and Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), in a viewpoint co-written with Commissioner of the DOHMH, Dr. Thomas Farley in the *Lancet's* 9/11 issue. The article details emergency response changes that have been made at DOHMH, including the creation of multiple emergency operations centers and the development of capacity to prophylact patients exposed to biological agents in the event of a terrorist attack. "Although the department's emergency response system is far stronger than it was a decade ago, it has not been tested with an emergency on the scale of 9/11, and the true ability to respond can never be known until such an emergency occurs," the authors say.

Farley TA, Weisfuse I. Redefining of public health preparedness after 9/11. *Lancet*. 2011; 378 (9794): 957-9.

Greater risk of respiratory disease, PTSD for those who were there on 9/11

Dr. Steven Stellman, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, and Dr. Sandro Galea, Gelman Professor and Chair, were co-authors with colleagues of a review paper in the *Lancet* synthesizing 10 years of research about the consequences of 9/11, and summarizing the key literature about mental health and physical health consequences of the attacks. There is now ample evidence, the review finds, that those who experienced or witnessed the September 11 attacks had elevated rates of mental disorders (particularly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression) and respiratory symptoms.

According to the authors, "Early studies identified respiratory effects, particularly asthma, and PTSD almost immediately after the attacks. Ongoing studies have not only confirmed these observations but continue to document 9/11-related physical and mental health care needs in large numbers of exposed individuals, including area residents, workers, and passersby, as well as identifying emerging conditions such as sarcoidosis and GERD, and perhaps heart disease. There is a continuing need for medical surveillance and services in these populations."

Perlman SE, Friedman S, Galea S, Nair HP, Eros-Sarnyai M, Stellman SD, Hon J, Greene CM. Short-term and medium-term health effects of 9/11. *Lancet*. 2011; 378 (9794): 925-34.



A NEW YORK CITY FIREFIGHTER WALKS AWAY FROM GROUND ZERO ON 9/11.

No rise in mortality for 9/11 rescue workers, but increased total and coronary heart disease mortality in highly exposed residents and area workers

Also published in the *Lancet* was an analysis of rescue and recovery workers 9 years after the September 11 attacks, which has found thus far that there has not been a disproportionately high mortality rate relative to New York City rates as a whole.

However, residents and workers in Lower Manhattan had significantly greater death rates from all causes combined, and heart disease in particular, if they had experienced intense exposure to the giant dust cloud raised by the towers' collapse, at least two injuries, and if they did not evacuate the area on the day of the attack.

Dr. Stellman is the senior epidemiologist on the study, which looked at new data from the World Trade Center Health Registry. Continued surveillance is needed in order to monitor mortality rates in the long term, the authors conclude.

Jordan HT, Brackbill RM, Cone JE, Debchoudhury I, Farfel MR, Greene CM, Hadler JL, Kennedy J, Li J, Liff J, Stayner L, Stellman SD. Mortality among survivors of the Sept 11, 2001, World Trade Center disaster: results from the World Trade Center Health Registry cohort. *Lancet*. 2011; 378 (9794):879-87.

9/11 recovery workers at elevated risk for Sarcoidosis

Workers who were most intensively involved in rescue and recovery efforts after the attack are also at elevated risk of contracting a rare disease called Sarcoidosis, in which immune granulomas (inflammatory cells) can affect the lymph nodes, lungs, liver, eyes, skin, or other tissues, according to a study co-authored by Dr. Stellman and colleagues in the *Journal of Occupational Environmental Medicine*.

Jordan HT, Stellman SD, Prezant D, Teirstein A, Osahan SS, Cone JE. Sarcoidosis Diagnosed After September 11, 2001, Among Adults Exposed to the World Trade Center Disaster. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2011; 53(9): 966-974.

Does media coverage of trauma cause PTSD?

In the wake of non-stop media coverage of a traumatic event, is it possible that viewers could develop PTSD? A *JAMA* commentary led by Dr. Yuval Neria, Professor of Clinical Psychology (in Psychiatry and in Epidemiology) and Director of Trauma and PTSD at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, discusses evidence from 9/11 and other epidemiologic studies that show that mental health effects among indirectly exposed populations indicate “initial but not extended increases in the rate of PTSD symptoms” over time. The authors suggest that further research, using novel methodologies such as fear conditioning and extinction models are needed to aid in identifying high-risk individuals and making clinical interventions.

Neria Y, Sullivan GM. Understanding the Mental Health Effects of Indirect Exposure to Mass Trauma Through the Media. *JAMA*. 2011 Sep 8. [Epub ahead of print]

A review of 9/11 health consequences

Another summary of many of the studies of the past decade is co-authored by Dr. Lorna E. Thorpe, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, in a commentary for *JAMA*. In their synthesis, the authors find that consistently between 8 to 12 % of exposed groups were diagnosed with adult-onset asthma, mostly developing in the first year after the attacks, and that between 12 to 23% experienced PTSD symptoms. Questions regarding the pathophysiology of WTC-associated respiratory illness, the nature of late-onset PTSD, and how physical and mental illness interact remain unanswered, and a framework for evaluating less common conditions should be established. With the advantage of the knowledge accumulated, “future disaster response will benefit from the nation’s decade of dealing with consequences of the WTC attack,” the authors say.

Thorpe LE, Friedman S. Health Consequences of the World Trade Center Disaster: A 10th Anniversary Perspective. *JAMA*. 2011 Sep 8. [Epub ahead of print]

Mental health care on a global scale

Mental, neurological, and substance use disorders (MNS)—such as depression, dementia, and alcoholism—constitute 13 % of the global disease burden, but not nearly a proportionate amount of resources in many healthcare systems around the world, according to an article published in *Nature* by members of the Global Mental Health initiative, including Dr. Pamela Y. Collins, Associate Clinical Professor of Epidemiology and Clinical Psychiatry, and Dr. Dana March, Adjunct Associate Research Scientist. The article details the Initiative’s top priorities for MNS research in the next 10 years, which include identifying the root causes of MNS, expanding access to care, and raising awareness of the global burden of MNS. “Even incremental progress in addressing the grand challenges in global mental health could lead to significant economic and quality-of-life benefits... that would far outweigh investment costs,” the authors say. For more information, visit the Grand Challenges website:

<http://grandchallengesgmh.nimh.nih.gov>.

Collins PY, Patel V, Joestl SS, March D, Insel TR, Daar AS; Scientific Advisory Board and the Executive Committee of the Grand Challenges on Global Mental Health, Anderson W, Dhansay MA, Phillips A, Shurin S, Walport M, Ewart W, Savill SJ, Bordin IA, Costello EJ, Durkin M, Fairburn C, Glass RI, Hall W, Huang Y, Hyman SE, Jamison K, Kaaya S, Kapur S, Kleinman A, Ogunniyi A, Otero-Ojeda A, Poo MM, Ravindranath V, Sahakian BJ, Saxena S, Singer PA, Stein DJ. Grand challenges in global mental health. *Nature*. 2011; 475 (7354): 27-30.



Blood neurotoxin concentrations relative to coffee and cigarette consumption

Harmaline, a potent neurotoxin linked with several neurological disorders, is present in many foods as well as coffee and cigarettes. In an epidemiological sample of nearly 500 people, Dr. Elan Louis, Professor of Neurology & Epidemiology (in the G. H. Sergievsky Center & the Taub Institute), and Dr. Pam Factor-Litvak assessed whether morning food and coffee consumption and smoking were reflected in blood harmaline concentrations. The investigators found that morning food/coffee/cigarette usage did not correlate with blood harmaline concentrations. These data indicate that the inability to withhold or avoid these exposures are not likely to affect on measured blood harmaline levels in human populations.

Louis ED, Factor-Litvak P, Gerbin M, Jiang W, Zheng W. Blood harmaline concentrations in 497 individuals relative to coffee, cigarettes, and food consumption on the morning of testing. *J Toxicol*. Epub 2011 May 16

IN THE NEWS



Dr. Keyes' alcohol study featured in *Time*, CBS, AMNew York, and the LA Times



Los Angeles Times

Making a media splash with coverage in *Time*, on the front page of *AM New York*, CBS 2 New York, and the *LA Times* was an analysis led by Dr. Katherine Keyes, Epidemiology Merit Fellow, showing an increase in binge drinking and alcoholism in the US, particularly among women born after World War II. Dr. Keyes and co-authors Dr. Guohua Li and Dr. Deborah Hasin, evaluated data from 31 studies on alcohol drinking patterns, dating as far back as 1948. They found that younger generations consume more alcohol than their elders and that drinking rates have continued to rise among women, as have diagnoses of alcohol disorders. Interestingly, the same patterns have not been seen in Western Europe and Australia, where alcohol consumption has stayed level. The news coverage has fixated particularly on the implications of the rise in alcohol consumption among younger women. "It seems like the introduction of more women into the workforce, and more upwardly mobile women — while that has many, very positive benefits to society — is also reducing social sanctions on drinking," Dr. Keyes said. Or as the cover of *AM New York* put it "Ladies' Night, Every Night."

The findings will be published in the December 2011 issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*.

Dr. Larson's study of antibiotic soaps featured

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN™

A July 5 article in *Scientific American* called "Scientists discover that antimicrobial wipes and soaps may be making you sick," cites a study by Dr. Elaine Larson, Professor of Pharmacology and Therapeutic Research (in Nursing) and Epidemiology, as "the most comprehensive study of the effectiveness of anti-biotic and non-antibiotic soaps." Dr. Larson and colleagues found that antibiotic soaps were associated with increases in the frequency of fever, runny nose, and cough, for hand washers with chronic diseases (like asthma or diabetes).

Reuters spotlights large arsenic study by Dr. Ahsan



Tens of millions of people in Bangladesh have been put at risk of an early death from drinking groundwater contaminated with arsenic, according to a study led by Dr. Habibur Ahsan, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, which was covered in *Reuters* in June. The researchers linked more than 20 percent of deaths over a 10-year period studying 12,000 Bangladeshis who were exposed to arsenic through contaminated drinking water. "Tens of millions of people there are at high risk of dying early. Something needs to be done urgently to reduce the exposure to arsenic for this population and find alternative, safe drinking water sources," Dr. Ahsan told *Reuters*.

New York Times covers Dr. Galea

The New York Times

The New York Times in July reported on an article lead authored by Dr. Sandro Galea, Gelman Professor and Chair of Epidemiology, which calculated how many deaths are attributable to poverty and other social factors. To estimate the number of deaths attributed to each factor, Dr. Galea and his colleagues reviewed nearly 50 studies on the subject and ran a meta-analysis of the data. For the year 2000, the study attributed 245,000 deaths to low education; 176,000 deaths to racial segregation; 162,000 to low social support; 133,000 to individual poverty; 119,000 to income inequality; and 39,000 to area-level poverty, which is on par with deaths caused by accidents that year (119,000) and those caused by lung cancer (156,000).

Dr. Hoven about 9/11's psychological impact

Detroit Free Press

An article in the *Detroit Free Press* about the psychological impact of 9/11 on children mentions an ongoing study by Dr. Christina Hoven, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology (in Psychiatry), which focuses on the impact of children in a 100-mile radius of New York City, looking particularly at the children of first responders and World Trade Center evacuees.

"So far, her research shows that children are very resilient. A single incident, such as 9/11, is not likely to cause untoward psychological problems, she says. However, children are more likely to experience psychological problems—such as post-traumatic stress syndrome and depression—when they are repeatedly exposed to violent episodes," the article says.

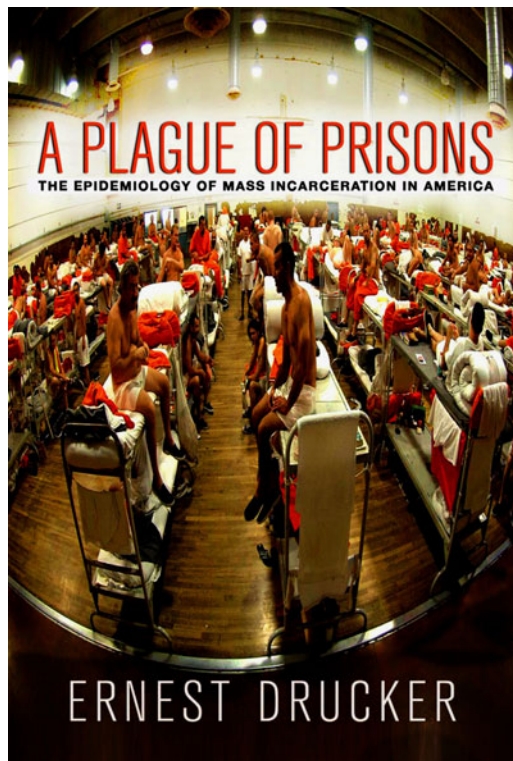


NEW RELEASES

Mass imprisonment as an epidemic in Dr. Drucker's new book

The new book *A Plague of Prisons* (The New Press) by Dr. Ernest Drucker, Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology, examines the United States' prison explosion through an epidemiologic lens. With the highest rate of incarceration in the world (743 prisoners per 100,000 population), imprisonment has become the nation's default response to too many offenses by too many young Americans — seen most spectacularly in the failed war on drugs, the book says. With his trenchant analysis, Dr. Drucker argues that American-style mass incarceration, with its huge racial and ethnic disparities, concentrates its traumatic effects on the families and social networks of the poorest Americans, including their children. His discussion of the consequential shift in public policy that has created this environment draws on expertise Dr. Drucker gained treating drug addiction and studying AIDS in the South Bronx for 40 years. Like many infectious diseases, mass incarceration spreads and becomes self sustaining as a chronic disabling condition — one that requires a public health solution based on prevention.

The Department is hosting a party on October 5, 2011, in honor of the release of Dr. Drucker's book.



SUBMITTED GRANTS

DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, JANUARY–AUGUST 2011

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR 

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR 

PROFESSOR 

0 10 20 30 40 50

JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER



BRIEF MENTIONS



Dr. Pablos-Méndez confirmed to USAID post

In August, President Obama and the US Senate confirmed Dr. Ariel Pablos-Méndez to serve as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Global Health at USAID. Dr. Pablos-Méndez joins the USAID leadership team with a vision to shape the Bureau for Global Health's programmatic efforts to accomplish sustainable, scalable, and measurable impact on the lives of people in developing countries.



Faculty sit on panel with White House drug chief and NYC DA

Epidemiology faculty members Dr. Leslie Davidson (pictured on left), and Dr. Deborah Hasin (right) joined a panel discussion with White House Drug Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske and Manhattan District Attorney Vance in Washington Heights. Participants highlighted the emerging challenges of prescription drug abuse and called for a public health approach to drug abuse prevention linked to community engagement and the justice system.



Injury Free Coalition honors young shooting victim with playground

The Injury Free Coalition for Kids (IFC) and its Executive Director Dr. Barbara Barlow helped dedicate a new playground in honor of Christina-Taylor Green, the youngest victim of the shooter who targeted Rep. Gabrielle Giffords in January. The new, state-of-the-art playground was erected at Green's elementary school in Mesa Verde, Arizona and was made possible by a \$140,000 donation from the Allstate Foundation to IFC.



Dr. Gatto's new baby

Congratulations to Dr. Nicolle Gatto and family, who welcomed new baby boy Kamil Reterska-Gatto in August. She joins proud older brother Luca.



Dr. Campbell's new baby

Congratulations to Dr. Ulka Campbell who along with her husband, Scot, welcomed baby girl Shreya Campbell on August 17th, who joins older sister Sonali.



Dr. Ornstein's new baby

Congratulations to Dr. Katherine Ornstein, who, along with her husband, Philip Noyes, announced the birth of their baby Sylvia Carolina Noyes on May 23, 2011, at 9pm. She is named for Katherine's grandmother and the place where her parents met. "Kiki", as she is known to her big brother, weighed 8 lbs 2 oz and everyone is healthy and happy!



AWARDS & GRANTS



Dr. Hasin receives Jellinek award

Dr. Deborah A. Hasin, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, is the recipient of the Jellinek Memorial Award for

2011, one of the highest honors given in the field of alcohol research. Dr. Hasin was selected for her pre-eminent research on the epidemiology of alcoholism and the measurement of alcohol use disorders in general populations.

The Jellinek Memorial Fund was established to commemorate Dr. E.M. Jellinek, an expert on alcoholism and its treatment.



Dr. Salim Abdool Karim honored with European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership Award

Dr. Salim Abdool Karim has been selected winner of the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) Award for Outstanding Senior African Scientist for 2011. The award consists of a certificate of recognition together with a cash prize of 20,000 Euros. This is a richly deserved honor for Dr. Abdool Karim and rounds out a trifecta of recent awards including his receiving the Gold Medal for Science in Medicine from the South African Medical Association and his recent award of the Science-for-Society Gold Medal by the Academy for Science in South Africa. Dr. Abdool Karim will be presented with his award at the Sixth EDCTP Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on October, 12.



Dr. Koenen elected president of the International Society for Traumatic Stress

Dr. Karestan Koenen, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and

the leader of the psych/neuro cluster, has been elected president- of the International Society for Traumatic Stress (ISTSS) for a term that starts in fall of 2012. She will serve as president-elect until then, beginning this November. With more than 3,000 members, ISTSS is the largest and premiere global organization concerned with research about the consequences of trauma. It is a terrific honor for Dr. Koenen and suitably reflects her prominence in the field. Although many Columbia faculty have, over the years, been very actively involved in ISTSS this is the first time a faculty member has been elected President.



Dr. Thorpe recipient of Northeast Regional Public Health Leadership Institute Leadership Challenge Award

Dr. Lorna Thorpe, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, was presented with the Northeast Regional Public Health Leadership Institute's (NEPHLI) 2011 Leadership Challenge award. The honor recognizes "her commitment to understanding and monitoring the health status of New York City and its many communities, her contribution to developing data-driven municipal health policies, and her focus on developing future public health leaders while serving as Deputy Commissioner at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene."



Dr. Quarraisha Abdool Karim receives South Africa's Woman in Science Award

Dr. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Associate Professor of Clinical

Epidemiology, has been honored with the South African government's Distinguished Woman in Science Award in the Life, Natural, and Engineering Sciences for 2011. She was recognized for her contributions to science broadly, and especially her work in the CAPRISA 004 tenofovir gel trial, which provided the first clinical trial evidence that antiretroviral drugs can prevent sexually transmitted HIV infection in women. In her acceptance, Dr. Abdool Karim paid tribute to the women who had been part of the trial, saying: "The real heroines are the 889 women who participated in the CAPRISA 004 trial. This award recognizes their contribution as much as it recognizes my contribution to HIV prevention."



FACULTY PROFILE

KARESTAN KOENEN



The appointment of Karestan C. Koenen, PhD, to the Department as an Associate Professor of Epidemiology, is not so much an arrival as a return. An alumna of the Psychological Epidemiology Training program (PET), she counts as mentors several Department faculty and has worked with many of them since on studies.

Dr. Koenen's research uses a lifecourse approach to focus on the interplay of genetic and environmental risk factors in the development of PTSD, and its comorbidity with psychiatric and substance use disorders.

She has been central in helping move the field towards recognizing the developmental origins of PTSD and other common mental disorders and in clarifying the role of gene-environment interplay in shaping population mental health. More recently, she has expanded her focus to stress-related mental disorders generally including major depression and other anxiety disorders.

Dr. Koenen is currently principal investigator on two large grants. Both are R01's supported by the National Institute for Mental Health. The first is a partnership with the World Mental Health Organization to investigate the epidemiology of trauma exposure and PTSD in over 30 countries around the world.

The second is a large study of the genetic factors that influence risk of PTSD in women, using data and recruited participants from the Nurse's Health Study II cohort.

In addition to her research, Dr. Koenen will lead the psychiatric neurology cluster which she wants to make "a home for all students—especially for those who aren't on training grants."

Dr. Koenen was first exposed to epidemiology and genetic research while working on her PhD in clinical psychology at Boston University, by her mentor, Dr. Michael J. Lyons. It was

through Dr. Lyons—a psychologist whose work focuses on behavioral and psychiatric genetic—that she first heard about PET, as he was an alumna of the program and highly recommended it.

After she was accepted as a post-doctoral fellow, she found herself immersed in an environment of rigorous, critical thinking that at the same time was very nurturing—a rare combination, she says. "I always tell people that PET taught me how to think," she says of the program and its faculty members. "All of the positive stuff that has come out of my work is through them."

Dr. Bruce Dohrenwend, who was director of PET when Dr. Koenen started her fellowship, says, "Recruiting her then to the fellowship was a great idea. It is an even better idea to have brought her back now as a faculty member."

Prior to returning to Columbia, Dr. Koenen was a faculty member at Boston University and a clinical research psychologist at the Women's Health Sciences Division, National Center for PTSD in the VA Boston Healthcare System. She moved to Harvard School of Public Health as an Assistant Professor in 2004. During this time, she broadened her focus on environmental adversity from individual-level exposures to include social contexts, and expanded her interest in the life course approach to include the effects of mental disorders such as PTSD on the development of chronic disease.

"I have admired and profited from her review articles on gene-environment interaction in PTSD. They illustrate the breadth of her mastery of the literature on genetic factors as they may relate, in complex ways, to factors in the environment. Her expanded agenda is very ambitious and is proving to be very important," Dr. Dohrenwend says.

Among her awards and honors, Dr. Koenen received the 2005 Robins-Guze Investigator Award from The American Psychopathological Association, an Outstanding Postdoctoral Mentor Award at Harvard, and was just elected President of the International Society for Traumatic Stress for the fall of 2012.

Although she says she will miss her community of friends in Cambridge, Mass., she is excited to be back in New York City. In her free time, she likes to do yoga, which she says is an "obsession" of hers.



FACULTY

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

R. Graham Barr promoted to Associate Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology (with tenure) in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster

Christina Hoven promoted to Professor of Clinical Epidemiology (in Psychiatry) in the psych/neuro epidemiology cluster

Rose Lai appointed Assistant Professor of Clinical Epidemiology in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster

Yuval Neria promoted to Professor of Clinical Psychology (in Psychiatry and in Epidemiology) in the psych/neuro epidemiology cluster

Shakira Suglia appointed Assistant Professor of Epidemiology in the social epidemiology cluster



STAFF PROFILE

LAURA GOLDENKRANZ



As Assistant to Dr. Sandro Galea, Laura Goldenkranz keeps the office of the Chair running smoothly and efficiently, ably juggling multiple responsibilities and demands. She handles the Chair’s day-to-day schedule, correspondence, and, with other members of the core staff, provides support for a range of Chair’s office events. Although Laura has only been in her position since March, she is a familiar face and an integral presence to the functions of the Department.

“In many ways she is the public face of Department, both in the School and outside the School. Laura is an essential part of the Chair’s office operations. She juggles a complicated job, well, making it look easy,” says Dr. Galea.

Laura is also highly appreciated by her colleagues in the Department.

“As a co-worker, Laura is extremely generous in offering her time and effort for projects and other tasks, and really cares that things run smoothly,” says Elaine Meyer, Communications Coordinator. “She is incredibly easy to work with and has a calm and professional presence that I very much admire.”

Before coming to the Chair’s office, Laura acquired a wealth of experience working for nearly 7 years in the

Washington, DC, office of US Senator Carl Levin of Michigan. She began working for Senator Levin as a staff assistant, but quickly rose through the ranks to become administrative director and systems administrator, a position she held for nearly three years. Her responsibilities fell on both the policy side and operations side of the office. Among other things, she researched and proposed policy initiatives across multiple issues, administered an annual operating budget of over \$3 million, and managed operational support functions for all of Senator Levin’s offices.

Soon after she started with the Senator, Laura was assigned to field constituent phone calls — on September 10, 2011. The events of the next day changed everything about working for Congress, she says. For one, the phone lines were flooded by people wanting more information and asking for American flags. There was also much more committee work to be done by Senator Levin, who was (and still is) Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

“It was really interesting to see how things actually got done. It was nothing you could learn from a book or in school,” Laura says of her time in Washington.

A New Jersey native, Laura earned a BA in political science and environmental studies at Washington University. She later earned an MS in biomedical science policy and advocacy from Georgetown University, which she completed while working in Congress. Deciding she wanted to pursue her interest in sciences, Laura moved to Philadelphia in 2008 to attend the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned a post-baccalaureate pre-health program certificate.

Today Laura is particularly interested in studying bioterrorism, which combines her twin interests of science and policy.

In her free time, she likes to visit her nephews, who are 4-years-old and 10-months-old. She also likes to knit, which she taught herself how to do.



STAFF

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

Autumn Austin appointed Research Assistant in the infectious disease epidemiology cluster

Danielle Awad promoted to Project Manager in the lifecourse epidemiology cluster

Kathleen Flandrick appointed Senior Cluster Administrator in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster

Preston Garnes promoted to Research Assistant in the infectious disease epidemiology cluster

Kim Guevara appointed Senior Cluster Administrator in the epidemiology innovation and social epidemiology clusters

Ann Johnston promoted to Project Manager in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster

Katrina Kezios appointed Project Coordinator in the lifecourse epidemiology cluster

Delcia Rivas Tapia appointed Research Assistant in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster

Evelyn Silva appointed Technician B in the infectious disease epidemiology cluster

Kerri Zezulinski appointed Senior Cluster Administrator in the psych/neuro epidemiology cluster



STUDENT PROFILE

PATRICK DAWSON



Patrick Dawson is an MPH '12 candidate whose research interest is in the intersection of emerging infectious disease epidemiology and health disparities. He has a range of health experience from working at hospitals, for an AIDS organization, and as an Epi Scholar at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

Patrick came to Mailman in the fall of 2010 just months after earning a BA in Biological Sciences and Global Health from Northwestern University. Although he came straight to graduate school from college, Patrick had already amassed extensive work and volunteer experience in the health field. As a high school student in Middletown, New Jersey, he volunteered at local hospitals and for his local Emergency Medical Services post. As an undergraduate he worked at AIDSCare Chicago (now EdgeAlliance AIDSCare Progressive Services), which provides housing and life services to individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS. As part of his work there, he also helped execute an end-of-summer fundraising event throughout Chicago, which raised about \$25,000.

At Mailman, Patrick works for Dr. Joyce Pressley and is co-chair of Mailman's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer health task force.

Patrick's summer was greatly enriched as an Epi Scholar at the DOHMH's Bureau of Tuberculosis Control, where he led a research project investigating the epidemiology of tuberculosis from 2001 to 2010 among New York City public housing residents. (The Epi Scholars program provides epidemiological training under the mentorship of an experienced public

health professional at the DOHMH). Patrick says he learned a great deal from his peers in Epi Scholars and the Health Research Training Program, many of whom are also Columbia MPH students. He will soon be presenting research findings to the DOHMH in an upcoming agency-wide Epi Grand Rounds.

The experience has informed Patrick's primary research interest. "I strongly believe that worsening health gaps between different populations provide a basis and opportunity for the proliferation of novel or once-'conquered' pathogens. This became even more apparent to me while working at the Bureau of Tuberculosis Control, as TB is a disease that disproportionately burdens poor and marginalized populations. These disparities not only mask the epidemic — creating a false sense of invulnerability — but also create an environment of disease amplification in isolated communities that threaten the health of all," he says. "I intend to study this interconnection further by examining ways disease surveillance, rapid pathogen identification, and grassroots health reform can lead to a more holistic defense against the microbial world."

In addition to his other commitments, Patrick is starting an Epi journal club this semester with the help of doctoral-master's student liaisons Catherine Richards and Carolyn Herzig. The group will hold regular meetings in which an Epi master's student can present a recent epidemiological paper and lead discussion about the methodology, findings, and implications. "Hopefully these discussions will not only supplement our academic training in epidemiology but will provide additional opportunities to explore areas of interest, such as infectious disease or social epi," Patrick says. The first journal club took place September 28, and the club is open to all Epi master's students.

In his free time, Patrick likes exploring the city, going to baseball games, spending time with his new Mailman friends, and reading. He also has made it his goal to complete as many of the weekend plans as possible recommended by Biostatistics Professor Dr. Martina Pavlicova in her first lecture of the school year.



Dr. Lipkin and CII play starring role in film thriller *Contagion*

Director Steven Soderbergh and screenwriter Scott Z. Burns's recently released epic thriller *Contagion* imagines the spread of a deadly airborne virus as it makes its way across the globe, destabilizing nations and posing incredible challenges to the scientists who must identify the disease. It's a scenario most Americans could scarcely imagine, which is probably why the filmmakers approached an expert in the area of virus hunting, Epidemiology's own Dr. W. Ian Lipkin, to be an advisor for the film. Dr. Lipkin's Center for Infection and Immunity (CII) hosted actresses Kate Winslet and Jennifer Ehle for trainings at CII, accompanied Ms. Winslet to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for research on her role, and helped design a micrograph of the virus at the center of the film.

Dr. Lipkin admits that he was "wary" when he was approached in late 2008 to work on a film directed by Soderbergh about a flu-like pandemic, because of the far-fetched nature of most disaster movies. As he put it in an op-ed published in *The New York Times* on September 11, "Moviegoers might find fantasies[...]entertaining, but for a microbe hunter like me, who spends his days trying to identify the viruses that cause dangerous diseases, the truth about the potential of global outbreaks is gripping enough." However, Dr. Lipkin soon found that Mr. Soderbergh and Mr. Burns were determined to make a realistic film. With the hope that *Contagion* might sound the alarm of the very real threat of emerging infectious disease, Dr. Lipkin signed on to be a consultant for the film.

To heighten the plausibility of the fictional MEV-1 virus depicted in *Contagion*, Dr. Lipkin and his team at CII "used as our inspiration the Nipah virus, which in Malaysia in the late 1990s jumped from bats to pigs to humans, causing respiratory disease and encephalitis and resulting in more than 100 deaths before it was contained by quarantine."

Some of the movie's most chilling scenes recall the trip Dr. Lipkin made in 2003 to Beijing at the invitation of the Chinese government to address the SARS outbreak. "My memories of deserted streets, food and supply shortages, and political instability are reflected in scenes in *Contagion*. I hope the public and our lawmakers will see the movie as a cautionary tale. Pandemics have happened before. And they will happen again," he said.

Contagion has been widely praised in such publications as *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and *The Atlantic* as a smart, science-based thriller. The film is currently playing in select theaters.



DR. LIPKIN (CENTER), WITH ACTRESS KATE WINSLET (LEFT), AND STUART NICHOL (RIGHT), PHD, CHIEF, VIRAL SPECIAL PATHOGENS BRANCH, CDC, DISCUSSING THE SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY WITHIN THE LABORATORY SCENE. PHOTO COURTESY OF CANDICE HOFFMAN, CDC



DR. LIPKIN (CENTER) WITH DIRECTOR STEVEN SODERBERGH (LEFT) AND PRODUCER GREGORY JACOBS ON THE SET *CONTAGION*. COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PHOTO BY CLAUDETTE BARIUS.

9/11+10

SCIENCE, POLICY, AND PUBLIC HEALTH
LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT TEN YEARS

Policymakers, health professionals, and scientists discuss science and preparedness 10 years after 9/11

Most people remember exactly where they were on September 11, 2001, but far fewer are aware of the dramatic alterations that have emerged in the scientific and policy landscape since that day. To revisit what has been learned from the attacks and make recommendations for the future, the Department of Epidemiology and the National Center for Disaster Preparedness (NCDP) hosted the conference “9/11+10, Science, Policy, and Public Health: Looking Ahead to the Next Ten Years,” at Columbia’s Low Library on September 8. The event offered a rare and valuable opportunity to bring together local and federal policymakers, medical practitioners, academics, and members of the media to discuss the past, present, and future of preparedness.

The tone of the day was set by a presentation from Dr. Glenn Asaeda, Division Medical Director of emergency medical services at FDNY, who was one of the first emergency physicians on the scene after the airplane attacks on the World Trade Center. Taking the audience through the events of that morning, he reminded everyone of the magnitude and intensity of the experience, the tragic losses of that day, and the formidable public health response.

The event co-directors, Epidemiology Chair Dr. Sandro Galea, and Dr. Irwin Redlener, Director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness, followed with their perspectives on how 9/11 has shaped science and policy since then.

Unlike most large scale traumas of the past that were studied only years later, scientists were able to evaluate the mental and physical health consequences of 9/11 right away and to continue to monitor them over time, Dr. Galea said in his presentation. A multitude of studies conducted during the last 10 years have found that those who experienced or witnessed the attacks have an elevated risk of mental disorders (particularly post-traumatic stress disorder and depression) and physical health problems, such as respiratory symptoms. However, vulnerability to negative health and mental health outcomes after trauma is highly variable, and researchers have found that a substantial proportion of the population demonstrates a robust degree of resilience. Genetic, social, and environmental factors all appear to influence resilience in individuals.

Dr. Redlener and NCDP Deputy Director Dr. David Abramson presented survey research on Americans’ feelings about disaster preparedness since 9/11 and polled audience members with some of the same questions. Confidence levels on the part of both groups could be described as shaky. For instance, in response to the question “Is the US healthcare system ready to respond to a biological, chemical, or nuclear attack showed,” 66% of a sample of Americans and 76% of the audience answered no.

“The fact that you all, in large numbers, felt that the health system wasn’t ready, is deeply disconcerting,” Dr. Redlener told the audience.

Several of the government speakers offered perspectives on the

DR. MARGARET HAMBURG, COMMISSIONER OF THE U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, GIVES HER KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT 9/11+10



struggles and successes of coordinating among emergency workers, law enforcement, and public health officials to satisfy the new mandate of disaster preparedness.

“In the beginning it was very shocking how much we had to learn from each other,” said Dr. Margaret Hamburg, the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, a former professor at the Mailman School, and one of the keynote speakers. Her presentation went on to emphasize the importance of public health authorities in responding promptly and effectively to bioterrorist attacks and infectious agents that break out in the food or drug supply.

A media perspective was offered by Ms. Jeanne Meserve, CNN’s homeland security correspondent, who said that government can and should help to defuse unnecessary media hysteria by communicating what is going on.

“Tell us what you know; also, tell us what you don’t know. Don’t be afraid to say, ‘this is an unfolding situation,’” she advised the public officials in the audience.

Dr. Nicole Lurie, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, recounted in her keynote how she was told by countless citizens in earthquake-ravaged Joplin, Missouri, that their lives were saved because they had a plan ahead of time.

“At the end of the day, all response is local and response and recovery have to happen on the ground,” she said. Emphasizing that social connectedness is a critical feature in population resiliency, Dr. Lurie described a nascent federal initiative for using social media to build community connections both before and in the wake of disasters.

Guests on the two panels that followed— “The Science of Preparedness, Response, and Recovery” and “Preparing for Disasters: What Do We Need to Do Now?” — debated whether and in what ways responsibilities for preparedness can be balanced between government and the individual.

In his closing words, Dr. Galea acknowledged the importance of having such a debate, and of bringing policymakers and scientists together for a conference about public health and disaster preparedness. “It is unusual to have a meeting where the two tribes are pushed together in the same room,” he said. “Of course, a successful meeting doesn’t solve everything — it’s simply a milestone on a much longer trajectory.”

The scientific research presented by Dr. Galea at the event was covered in several media pieces, including NPR, Public Radio International, *Time*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

In addition to our conference attendants, we had nearly 800 people tune in for video streaming of the event, and 550 people view the NCDP blog on the event. Visit <http://ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/911.html> to view video and more from that day.



Introducing a seminar series on developing dissertation grant applications—the F31 and R36



Under the leadership of Dr. Leslie Davidson, Doctoral Program Director, and Dr. Deborah Hasin, the Department has developed a Pre-doctoral Dissertation Grant Seminar Series, which launched this fall with 8 students participating. The 6 session series is designed for second and third year doctoral students in epidemiology who are planning to submit F31 grants or R36 applications for dissertation funding in 2011-2012. It will provide students with both didactic and practical education on developing and polishing an application as students work with their sponsor.

Many faculty members with experience in submitting, sponsoring or reviewing dissertation applications have been very generous with their time and expertise in developing this series. It will run from September through December 2011 and will be evaluated, modified, and offered annually, complete with a Courseworks site with resource materials such as model applications, a checklist, and assignments. The sessions will cover an overview, the review process and criteria, working with your sponsor and with NIH program officers, developing a research training plan and a research strategy, formulating a biosketch, and other topics including a meeting with a National Institutes of Health program officer. It will culminate in mock reviews for the draft proposals, one in November for those submitting in December and one early in 2012 for those submitting in April. Faculty interested in participating in the mock review process or in the course next year should contact Dr. Davidson at lld1@columbia.edu.



CAREERS IN EPIDEMIOLOGY



p. 17

→ **Exploring a career in Epidemiology**

p. 18

→ **An alumnus's advice**

p. 19

→ **Epidemiology job placements by industry, 2007-2010**

p. 20

→ **Post-graduate career examples**

Exploring a career in Epidemiology

The flurry of first semester events that consume incoming graduate students can often push thoughts about career planning to the backburner. However, with practicum placements not far away and deadlines for fellowships on the horizon, students should start the process of “career exploration,” as soon as they can, says Ms. Tanya Cobbs Leslie, Assistant Dean and Director of the Office of Career Services (OCS). “It’s never too early to start. Now’s the time,” she says.

Students can begin their research with a visit to OCS, which is off of the lobby in Suite 1003 of the Allan Rosenfield Building, or by checking the OCS website, which has a wealth of resources, including information about upcoming workshops and job fairs; tips on writing a resume, cover letter, and preparing for interviews; and exclusives, like the Mailman e-recruiting service and access to the Recent Graduates Database. OCS also sends out a weekly email called Friday Announcements, with time-sensitive career and internship opportunities and other career-related content.

Ms. Cobbs Leslie recommends students start by visiting these four sections of the Career Services site:

- **Workshops and events**
http://www.mailmanschool.org/workshops/career_workshops.asp
- **Resume and CV advice**
<http://www.mailman.columbia.edu/students/career-svcs/strategies/resumes-and-cvs>
- **Mailman e-recruiting**
<http://www.mailman.columbia.edu/students/career-svcs/careers/mailman-e-recruiting>
- **Career planning calendar**
<http://www.mailman.columbia.edu/students/career-svcs/strategies/career-planning-calendar>

“

After finding an organization or position that intrigues you, do your homework and see if the mission of the organization or company fits in with your own philosophy, qualifications, and research interests. Then, I suggest reaching out to people in the Columbia network to see if anyone works at that company or in that field and asking for an informational interview. ”

— SARAH CHO, MPH '09. SURVEY ANALYST,
PUBLIC OPINION AND SURVEY RESEARCH,
KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION

An alumnus's advice

"I got my 'foot in the door' at CDC through the ASPH Allan Rosenfield Global Health Fellowship. After my fellowship expired, I transitioned into a contractor/consultant role as a Prevention Study Advisor. I currently manage a portfolio of HIV prevention studies/evaluations where I help CDC partner organizations bring research from the planning stage to implementation and close-out.

— **Tom Pyun, MPH '07.** Technical advisor, HIV Prevention, CTS Global Inc., assigned to the CDC Center for Global HIV/AIDS (San Francisco, CA and Tanzania)

Making the most of career resources (5 best practices from my point-of-view):

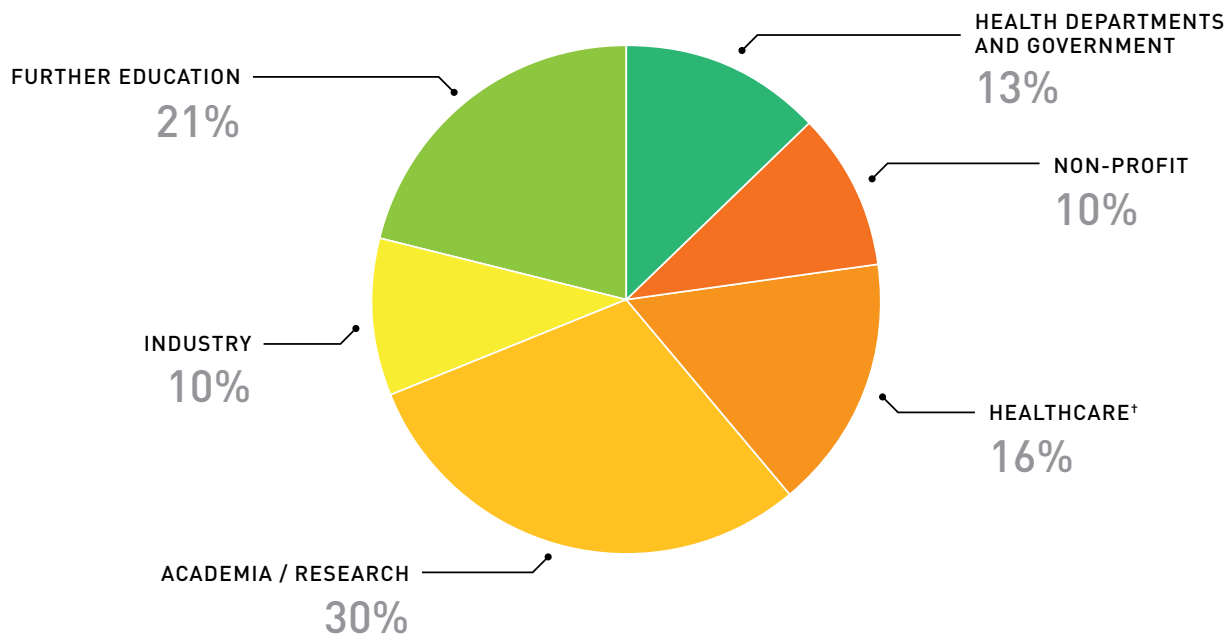
- Do, do, do internships and research assistantships throughout the school year and over the summer. If you don't have overseas experience, work hard to find an overseas summer placement and consider taking a semester off to pursue a longer-term placement.
- Plan ahead—be cognizant of application deadlines and build in enough time to review and revise cover letters and other application materials
- Over-invest in essays/cover letters—I screen candidate applications now, and I am shocked by the low-quality of some personal statements and essays. Make sure the essay/CV is succinct, well-organized, and proof read thoroughly. Believe me...they are scrutinized.
- Use OCS resources—I had Career Services review my resume while at Mailman and it resulted in a markedly improved product.
- Don't be afraid to take low-paying and/or temporary work. There is a lot of work to get done and many organizations are hiring temps, contractors, consultants, and other temporary workers. Better to do a short-term assignment and build your CV than wait around for the "perfect" position in this day and age.

“

I was able to walk in with a few questions about my resume and, with their direction, have a final draft in a day! They are more than happy to put in the effort to help students succeed. ”

— JACOB KOPP, MPH '12, SPEAKING ABOUT OCS

Epidemiology job placements by industry, 2007-2010*



* From an OCS survey of epidemiology department graduates. Respondents are made up predominantly of those who earned an MPH degree.

† Healthcare includes hospitals and clinics.

Resources for alumni

Alumni have all of the same resources available to them as current students. Recent graduates will continue to receive the OCS Friday Announcements for six months after graduating and can resubscribe at any time thereafter by e-mailing cd2594@columbia.edu. In your e-mail, please indicate your date of graduation and your department.

Post-graduate career examples

Global

- ASPH/CDC Allan Rosenfield Global Health Fellow, Kenya
- Research Associate, Aurum Institute, South Africa
- Fellow, Centre for AIDS Program and Research in South Africa (CAPRISA)
- Fellow (post-graduate 3 month opportunity), Ministry of Health, Mongolia
- HIV Advisor to Maternal/Child Health Department, Ministry of Health, Guyana
- Surveillance Epidemiologist, CDC, Mozambique

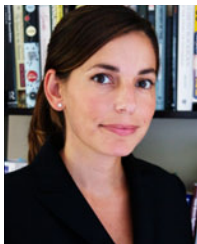
Domestic

- Surveillance Epidemiologist, CDC, Atlanta
- Surveillance Epidemiologist, San Francisco Department of Public Health
- Research with Pfizer Inc.
- Research at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York
- Post-graduate fellow with the NIH, Maryland
- Post-graduate fellow, Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
- Post-graduate fellow, Kaiser Family Foundation in Menlo Park, California

After Epi: Alumni career paths

Training in epidemiology is preparation for an array of engaging, meaningful careers in research and teaching. With a degree from the Department of Epidemiology in hand, our alumni have gone on to a variety of different organizations and careers, in academia, government, nonprofits, healthcare, and pharmaceutical research. Below, Two by Two catches up with some of our graduates to find out how their education helped them get to where they are today.

Academia



Dr. Allison Aiello

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN EPIDEMIOLOGY,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC
HEALTH IN ANN ARBOR, MI

PhD in Epidemiology '03

Dr. Allison Aiello already had a background in infectious disease research through an MS and a year-long Emerging Infectious Disease

Fellowship at the CDC when she embarked on her PhD in epidemiology at the Department in 1999. But she wanted to understand disease by interacting directly with people, which she got almost right away as a new doctoral student. Working under Dr. Elaine Larson, her research mentor, Dr. Aiello researched hand hygiene in a fast-paced hospital setting. Through Dr. Sharon Schwartz's methodology classes, Dr. Aiello continued to broaden her research interests to include studying sociological frameworks for understanding disease. Now the principal investigator of the Aiello Research Group and the Detroit Neighborhood Health Study, Dr. Aiello has been able to combine her background in the biology of infectious disease with the study of population-level influences, such as one's physical or social environment. Dr. Aiello advises young academics to be creative about carving out their research interests. "I think it's important to rise to the challenge and to not have any fears in terms of going out there and trying to start your own research agenda," she says. "Not everything pans out and that's okay."



Dr. Farzana Kapadia

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, NEW
YORK UNIVERSITY

PhD in Epidemiology '05

Dr. Kapadia's interest in epidemiology was sparked more than a decade ago when she directed a project assessing whether school-based research strategies were an effective methodology for estimating risk taking behavior among urban adolescents. It was in this position where she gained an appreciation for epidemiological research as well as an understanding of the challenges involved in applying the discipline's methods in real world settings.

After joining the doctoral program at Columbia, she was able to apply her practical skills and epidemiologic training by working on several multi-site intervention trials, funded by the CDC and NIH, at the New York Academy of Medicine's Center for Urban Epidemiology Studies (CUES).

At NYU, Dr. Kapadia is expanding upon her earlier experiences by engaging in collaborative research with colleagues at the university as well as in community-based settings, focusing on the social and cultural contexts of HIV-related behavior and risk taking among youth and adults in urban areas.

Health departments and government



Dr. Cynthia Driver

SENIOR EPIDEMIOLOGIST, OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DIVISION OF
MENTAL HYGIENE, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE (DOHMH)

DrPH in Epidemiology '05, MPH in Epidemiology '84

Dr. Cynthia Driver credits her epidemiology training for allowing her to have worked in many different content areas of public health, including tuberculosis control, diabetes and chronic disease, and mental hygiene. Dr. Driver began her career as an obstetrics/gynecological nurse practitioner but decided she wanted to work on prevention of illness at a population level. As an Epidemic Intelligence Service Fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention she "fell in love with epidemiology" and decided to go back to school for a DrPH. While earning the degree, Dr. Driver continued to work full-time at the DOHMH, which allowed her to directly apply what she was learning in school to her job.

At the DOHMH she has directed tuberculosis epidemiology activities including applying TB genotyping to investigate patterns of transmission in the community. She also worked on implementation of a registry of hemoglobin A1C results—a measure of blood glucose levels in people with diabetes—which was based on electronic reporting by laboratories. Dr. Driver says her skill set has allowed her to do work in a variety of clinical areas. "That's one of the wonderful things about epidemiology: the tools and methods are so transferable across many types of health behaviors and health problems."



Dr. Ariel Pablos-Méndez

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE BUREAU FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AT USAID AND PROFESSOR OF CLINICAL MEDICINE AND CLINICAL EPIDEMIOLOGY, MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN NEW YORK, NY

MPH in Epidemiology '92

In August, Dr. Ariel Pablos-Méndez was sworn in to his new post as Assistant Administrator for Global Health at USAID, after being nominated by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the US Senate. Dr. Pablos-Méndez, who also has a degree in internal medicine, has been at the helm of many innovative public health initiatives during his career. At the Rockefeller Foundation, where he was most recently Managing Director, he created several public-private partnerships for the development of drugs and vaccines for diseases of poverty and led a re-thinking of the Foundation's program on AIDS treatment in Africa, propelling a new initiative that treated mothers with AIDS and their families. He also directed the Foundation's global health strategy on transforming health systems in Africa and Asia. As Director of Knowledge Management at the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Pablos-Méndez worked to bridge the gap between research and implementation and established the WHO's first eHealth unit. As a young post-graduate fellow at Columbia back in 1991, Dr. Pablos-Méndez worked on the emergence of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis in New York City.

Industry



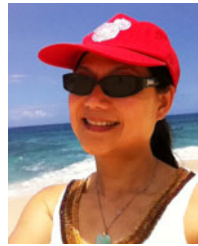
Dr. John Doyle

SR. VICE PRESIDENT AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, QUINTILES GLOBAL CONSULTING IN HAWTHORNE, NY

MPH in Epidemiology, '98; DrPH in Epidemiology, '05

At the world's largest biopharmaceutical services company, Quintiles, Dr. John Doyle uses his epidemiology background to advise pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device companies worldwide on strategic matters related to the clinical, economic, and public health impact of their products in development. Dr. Doyle completed his MPH and DrPH while working as associate director of health economics at Bristol Myers Squibb Co. and as the president and chief operating officer of Analytica International Inc., a healthcare research consultancy.

His epidemiologic training has been an integral part of his professional life, allowing him to advise clients and government officials on complex evaluation methods in real-world, research environments. Over the course of his career, he has built an expertise in comparative effectiveness research (CER), a patient-focused research methodology that is now being pioneered by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, an organization created by the 2010 health care law. Dr. Doyle has been sought after by policy stakeholders because of his knowledge of CER, which he says is a product of his training in epidemiology. "I use epidemiology's refined, observational techniques to help drug developers do a better job in investigating the risk-benefit and cost-benefit profile of their products," Dr. Doyle says.



Dr. Daisy Ng-Mak

DIRECTOR, GLOBAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AT MERCK & CO. INC. IN WEST POINT, PA

PhD in Epidemiology '00

As Director of Global Health Outcomes at Merck, Dr. Daisy Ng-Mak uses her epidemiology training to provide evidenced-based neuroscientific research that helps support and market pharmaceutical products. Her division uses many types of observational studies to test products that have already been through clinical trials.

Her PhD training prepared her well for a career in pharmaceuticals, she says: "What we learn in epidemiology is how to conduct a study, how to address measurement issues, how to run analysis, how to publish, and report. All of these technical skills are applied in outcomes research."

Dr. Ng-Mak was recruited by Merck and has worked there for 6 years. Before that, she was an assistant professor at Columbia. She cites many similarities between academia and the pharmaceutical industry. For instance, pharmaceutical companies have a grant-style structure by which scientists have to advocate for their research to get funding; however, the funding source is the company itself rather than the government. "You have to show that your studies are important enough to support the franchise. So the dynamic is very similar to that in academia," Dr. Ng-Mak says.

Non-profit



Dr. Mary Ann Chiasson

VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION, PUBLIC HEALTH SOLUTIONS AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CLINICAL EPIDEMIOLOGY (IN MEDICINE), MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN NEW YORK, NY

DrPH in Epidemiology '88, MPH in Epidemiology '85

Dr. Mary Ann Chiasson has since 1999 overseen research and evaluation at Public Health Solutions (PHS), a non-profit that is dedicated to improving the health of high risk, underserved populations. Before that, she worked for 15 years at the New York City Department of Health as an assistant director, epidemiologist and later, an assistant commissioner responsible for disease intervention and AIDS surveillance. During that time, she became a nationally-recognized expert on HIV transmission.

At PHS, Dr. Chiasson has launched with researchers at NYU the online video series "HIV Big Deal" (hivbigdeal.org) targeted at gay men who engage in high-risk behaviors. The campaign embodies epidemiologic principles in that it targets a specific population and makes an evidence-based intervention. And it has been effective, according to a survey that found gay men were significantly more likely to disclose their HIV status and to get tested for HIV three months after seeing the video.

When she began her epidemiology training, Dr. Chiasson had a lab research background but desired a career that brought her more in touch with real world problems. "Epidemiology for me was the perfect preparation," she says. "Now that we're in the world of evidence-based medicine, evidence-based public health, the rigorous training that you get in public health is really essential."



New looks around the Department

As part of our continued initiative at maximizing and improving our space, a few exciting changes are currently underway, under the leadership of Ms. Ebony King, Administrative Manager of Operations.

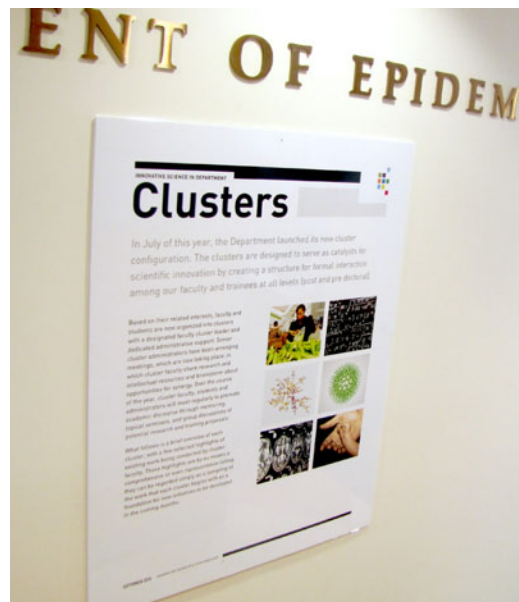
In the next few weeks, you should see on all our floors new artwork that comes straight from the pages of Two by Two. Additionally, new signage will be installed to help visitors find their way.

We are also making specific changes to a few of our floors.

The 7th floor conference room will soon be renovated so it can be of optimal use both as a classroom and a conference room. The finished product will have new paint, new flooring and extra floor space, a flat screen television that can project images from laptops, and videoconferencing capability.

The 15th floor reception area has already been transformed into a more practical work space. To further optimize workspace on the floor, the Department is in the process of creating a more user friendly area near the tower elevators. This will include a bar/ countertop with stools that can be used for eating or working from a laptop while taking in the views of the Hudson River. We are hoping that students in particular will find this space hospitable and useful.

If you have specific suggestions for physical space improvement, please do not hesitate to let Ebony know.



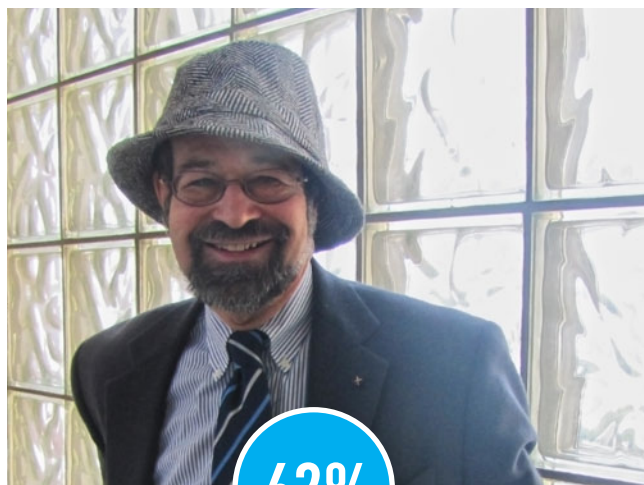
Who wore it better?

Dr. Andrew Rundle and Dr. Stephen Morse were each spotted recently rocking the same sporty fedora around the Department. Two by Two stopped each of them for a photo.



Dr. Andrew Rundle

38%



Dr. Stephen Morse

62%

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JULY – OCTOBER 2011

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