



2011

# Department of Epidemiology



Columbia University  
MAILMAN SCHOOL  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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# Epidemiology by the numbers

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Faculty appointed in Epidemiology . . . . .	169
Faculty with a primary academic or administrative home in Epidemiology . . . . .	64
Total grants submitted for calendar year 2011. . . . .	142
Rank among Mailman School departments in number of grants submitted . . . . .	1
Total dollar value of active funded projects administratively held in the Department . . . . .	\$92,037,925
Current year grant funding for calendar year 2011 . . . . .	\$19,326,251
Active funded projects . . . . .	104
Peer-reviewed scholarly articles published by faculty in 2011 . . . . .	700+
Percent increase in Department funding during past year . . . . .	19.9%
Centers of excellence led or co- led by faculty . . . . .	13
Doctoral/postdoctoral training programs led or co-led by faculty . . . . .	11
Collaborating departments and centers across the university . . . . .	48
Master's students currently enrolled . . . . .	208
Doctoral students currently enrolled . . . . .	70

# Welcome

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The traditional annual report looks back at what has been achieved over the past year. This report will certainly do that; however, it will also look forward, to chart a course for the projects and activities that we expect will flourish over the coming year.

First we look back. In 2010 and 2011 the Department of Epidemiology executed an 18-step Strategic Plan (Appendix 1) to optimize our research, training, and administrative functions. Our intention was to strengthen our foundations and to pave the way to forward-looking, innovative, programmatic work. We made substantial investments in increasing communication, sharing scientific achievements, and building opportunities for collaboration and development. We also invested in a reorganization and renewal of our administrative infrastructure and in the support, development, and career advancement of our faculty and staff. Our central organizing structure of the cluster system has allowed us to identify and disseminate scientific contributions and streamline administrative operations in the Department.

These investments have paid off handsomely. The Department of Epidemiology is now a very tight ship, capable of undertaking large and complex new initiatives, several of which it embarked on in 2011. Our research program has grown, prominence in the field has risen, and new avenues for multidisciplinary research, training, and service have emerged.

Now we look forward. We begin 2012 with a larger grant portfolio, an expanded set of academic programs, and, through strategic recruitment, an even more stellar roster of faculty.

With this foundation firmly in place, we are able to devote our energies fully toward realizing our vision for the future of the field of epidemiology and assuring that this Department will achieve excellence in meeting the challenges and complexities of population health now and in the coming decades.

The following pages provide details and examples of the Department's achievements over the course of 2011. For our faculty, students, and staff, this report aims to illustrate our collective efforts to move the Department forward. For our colleagues outside the Department, we hope that clarity about where we are headed and how we are getting there will continue to illuminate new opportunities for synergy and collaboration.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandro". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandro Galea, MD, DrPH  
Gelman Professor and Chair  
Department of Epidemiology

# Innovating

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In 2011, we launched three of our newest and most innovative programs—a summer institute, a global mental health program, and a program aimed at increasing collaborative epidemiologic research across the Columbia University Medical Center. This year also marked the introduction of our revamped doctoral program.

# EPIC

In June the Department launched its first ever Epidemiology and Population Health Summer Institute at Columbia University, or EPIC. The institute provides health professionals and students a unique opportunity to take week-long courses on population health, learning skills they might not otherwise have the time or resources to acquire.

EPIC meets one of our strategic goals of engaging a broader spectrum of trainees, particularly working health professionals. It also puts us in the same league as other top schools of public health that offer summer institutes.

Our first year was a great success. We offered 18 courses taught by 24 instructors over the month of June, covering epidemiologic theory and application as well as disease-centered content.

The program drew 125 participants from as near as New York City and as far as Australia and Africa. Particularly exciting was the variety of participants who took part in the program, including physicians and public health scholars from inside and outside Columbia; researchers from NGOs like the World Health Organization and the World Bank; practitioners from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; and trainees in the Department's Columbia-South Africa Training Program on HIV-Associated Malignancies.

Plans for EPIC 2012 are underway. We intend to expand the program by offering a greater number of courses and by reaching out to more potential participants. Promotional efforts will be focused in particular on New York City tri-state and international audiences, who were our most subscribed audiences in EPIC 2011.

For more information about EPIC, please visit [cuepisummer.org](http://cuepisummer.org)





## GMHP

The Department officially launched our Global Mental Health Program (GMHP), an initiative based at the Mailman School under co-directors Dr. Sandro Galea and Dr. Ezra Susser, in 2011. GMHP is rooted in the Mailman School's long tradition of excellence and leadership in population mental health studies across the globe and our premier psychiatric epidemiology training program for doctoral and post-doctoral students.



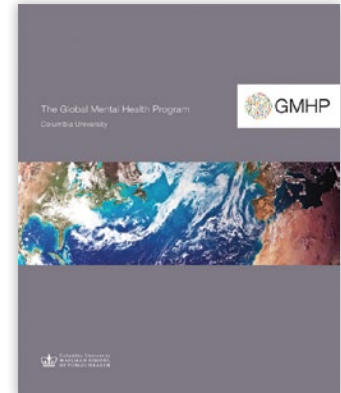
GMHP has five objectives that are very much intertwined:

- To catalyze discussion about global mental health at Columbia University with grand rounds, a visiting scholar program, and a seminar series
- To promote innovative interdisciplinary global mental health research and interventions
- To nurture young scholars and practitioners interested in global mental health by seeding innovative pilot projects and hosting GMHP fellows
- To build capacity in global mental health research and interventions in partner institutions in low and middle income countries
- To develop partnerships, interchange, and potential for collaborations with leading global mental health

As we launched GMHP, we secured grant funding from a new National Institutes of Health competition that awards centers that are building global mental health infrastructure. We became one of only 3 such centers funded worldwide. Through this grant, GMHP is partnering with colleagues in Chile, Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia to build a sustainable mental health research infrastructure in the region.

The program also partners with others at Columbia University who are engaged in global mental health, including the Global Health Initiative at the Mailman School of Public Health, the School of Social Work, the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, the New York State Psychiatric Institute, the Earth Institute, and other programs. We also count as partners other academic institutions, government, and global agencies on a variety of public mental health initiatives.

For more information about GMHP, please visit [cugmhp.org](http://cugmhp.org)

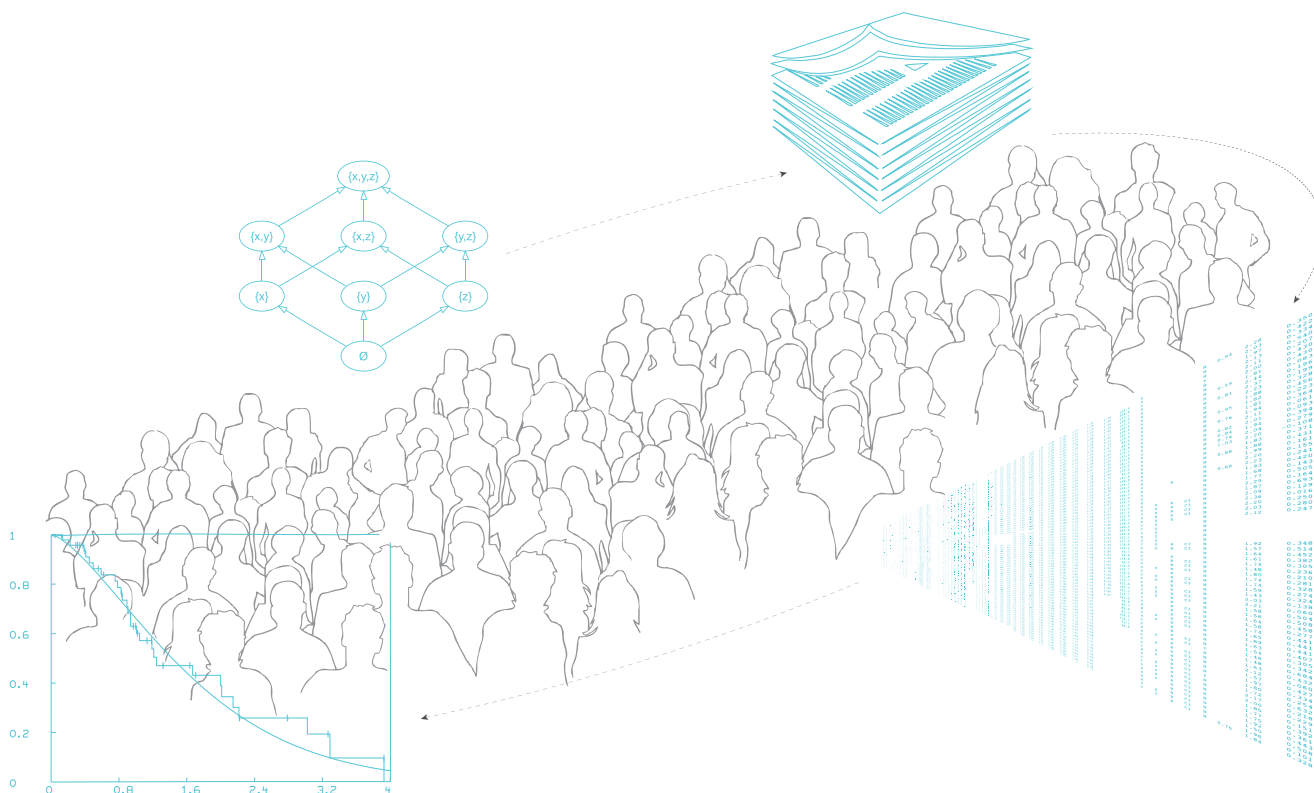


# EDGE

After laying the groundwork in 2010, the Department rolled out the EDGE (Epidemiology, Design, Guidance, and Expertise) program this fall. Under the leadership of director Dr. Andrew Rundle, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, EDGE works to develop partnerships between our epidemiologists and other Columbia University departments and centers leading to trans-disciplinary research and translational projects that use cutting edge epidemiologic methods.

Several projects have already benefited from EDGE partnerships, including two center grant applications submitted by colleagues at CUMC in partnership with EDGE faculty members with plans for epidemiology methodology core resources to be run by EDGE faculty. EDGE has also catalyzed collaborations between the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Department faculty aiming to build projects addressing the role of public housing in shaping HIV/AIDS care and treatment. EDGE is currently working with other CUMC Departments to build projects that we hope will come to fruition in 2012.

For more information about EDGE, please visit [cuedge.org](http://cuedge.org)





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## Revamped doctoral program

Last year the doctoral and curriculum committees worked together to update our PhD program. The new doctoral sequence, launched in the fall of 2011, provides students with comprehensive training in the biologic and social determinants of population health, the history of the discipline, grant and manuscript writing, and innovative methodological approaches. A full summary of the new doctoral course sequence is in the Summer Two by Two on page 18, included here as Appendix 2.

This year the doctoral committee put in place a comprehensive evaluation plan that will be used to assess the renewed doctoral curriculum throughout 2012.

# Building

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The Department continues to add outstanding faculty members, building on its roster of excellence. We also are fulfilling our goal of expanding our doctoral and postdoctoral training opportunities.

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## New faculty

Our new faculty appointees join five out of our six clusters, where their innovative work will help build our research capacity in all areas of epidemiology. We added new faculty through two mechanisms:

1. We launched a formal search that brought us additions from all over the country.
2. We created several joint and interdisciplinary appointments with faculty from other schools and departments across the Medical Center Campus. These appointments serve to build on our foundational strength and deepen our ties with other CUMC departments.

We welcomed the following new faculty members:

- **Dr. Jeremiah Barondess**, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster
- **Dr. Magdalena Cerdá**, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, in the psych / neuro epidemiology cluster
- **Dr. Crystal Fuller**, Associate Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, in the infectious disease epidemiology cluster
- **Dr. Henry Greenberg**, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine (in the Institute for Human Nutrition and in Epidemiology), in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster
- **Dr. Karestan Koenen**, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, in the psych / neuro epidemiology cluster
- **Dr. Benjamin Lebwohl**, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology, in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster
- **Dr. David Lederer**, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology (in Pediatrics), in the chronic disease epidemiology cluster
- **Dr. Shakira Suglia**, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, in the social epidemiology cluster
- **Dr. Athanasios Zavras**, Associate Professor of Dental Medicine and Epidemiology, in the epidemiology innovation cluster





## New training grants

### Postdoctoral training in HIV-related malignancies

Building on the achievements of our Southern Africa Fogarty AIDS International Training and Research Program and our National Cancer Institute (NCI)-funded T32 and R25 cancer research training programs, we have developed a program specifically designed to build capacity within South Africa for research on HIV-related malignancies. The Columbia University-South Africa Training Program for Research on AIDS-related Malignancies is funded as a D43 training grant by NCI and the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health. We have a formal collaboration with investigators at the University of KwaZulu/Natal (UKZN) in Durban, Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, and University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, but we welcome applicants from other institutions in South Africa as well.

In the first year of the D43, eight trainees came to us. Seven took courses in our new EPIC program and worked on research projects with mentors. The eighth trained full-time in the laboratory of Dr. Riccardo Dalla-Favera, the director of the Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center at Columbia and a leader in research on hematologic malignancies, including those that are HIV-related. Two trainees stayed in South Africa, where they are working with a mentor at UKZN on studies of Kaposi sarcoma.

This year, we received 16 outstanding applications and plan to accept 6 to be our 2012 trainees.



### Postdoctoral training in lifecourse approaches to nutrition and population health

The new Interdisciplinary Postdoctoral Training program in Nutrition and Population Health (T-32) funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, evolved from a long-standing collaboration between the Imprints Center for Genetic and Environmental Lifecourse Studies, the Institute of Human Nutrition, and the Division of Developmental Neuroscience (at NYSPI). The goal of the program is to provide postdoctoral training for research scientists (with a doctorate or equivalent degree) in a complementary discipline, either a basic science or in a population health science. The trainees have the opportunity to earn an MS degree in the complementary discipline. The program combines didactic, mentored, and independent research experiences.

Dr. Andrea Marques, the first trainee to enroll in the program, is an MD, PhD originally from Brazil. Her current work is focused on nutrition, development and mental health outcomes. Additional applications to the program will be accepted until December 1, 2011, for a start date January 1 through July 31, 2012.

More than 20 scientists from Norway participated, as well as research groups from the U.K. and China, along with faculty linked to the training grant and Imprints Center participated in a workshop held in October 2011 concerned with the ramifications from recent findings on folate (JAMA 306(14):1566-73, 2011) and more general lifecourse nutrition issues.

Supporting  
faculty, students,  
and staff

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Department support of faculty, students, and staff has increased this year. We have sharpened our commitment to faculty by establishing formal mentoring and evaluation programs. We have focused on enhancing the student experience, and we have provided staff with the information and resources needed to ensure their optimal job performance and satisfaction.

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## Faculty

Our formal faculty mentoring and review programs ensure that our junior faculty are actively supported in the important early stages of their career and that the achievements of all faculty members are well recognized. We've also added a new faculty and staff orientation and clarified teaching and service expectations.

### Mentoring

We launched a formal, enhanced mentoring program in February 2010 which now has paired 25 mentor-mentees. All new assistant professors are part of the program and are paired up with a mutually agreed-upon mentor.

The program, led by Vice Chair Dr. Bill Friedewald, has been viewed as an asset by mentors and mentees alike. Building on the program's success in 2011, we aim to enhance it in two ways during 2012:

- We will consolidate opportunities for internal grant review for junior faculty through the mentoring program, offering all junior faculty the opportunity to have grants reviewed through the Chair's office before submission.
- Feedback from mentors will be included in the materials considered in the annual faculty review. This will close the loop between the chair's office annual review process and the mentors' role in helping junior faculty to meet the benchmarks required for promotion.

### Review

The Department conducted its first annual full faculty review in 2010, reviewing materials from 157 Epidemiology faculty members.

The review successfully met our four stated aims: it provided a clear picture of individual faculty achievements over the past year and areas in need of improvement; it enabled the Chair's office to evaluate the Department's overall strengths and weaknesses; it helped the Chair's office understand each faculty member's engagement in the Department and identify new directions and synergies; and it provided faculty members with an opportunity to step back and reflect on their accomplishments over the last year.

For junior faculty, the review offered a picture of all important promotion milestones, and for joint, adjunct, and part time faculty, it helped us to assess the nature of their scholarly contributions and, where appropriate, make recommendations for changes that better serve the interests of the faculty member and the Department. For full-time faculty, the review helped to determine salaries for the next academic year.

We have now incorporated the review process as an annual feature of Department life. As we embark on the 2011 annual faculty review, we are encouraging faculty members to include a one-page narrative accompaniment in the form of a memorandum to the Chair. In addition, as noted in our summary of enhancements to junior faculty mentoring, above, this year we will incorporate formal feedback from junior faculty mentors in their annual review materials.



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## New faculty and staff orientation program

During 2011 we developed a formal orientation program to optimize the onboarding experience for our new faculty and staff and provide them with the resources they need to function at a high level from the very beginning. The program has two components:

- An orientation meeting with the Chair, Department Administrator, Administrative Director, Associate Director of Academic Programs, Operations Manager, and the relevant Senior Cluster Administrator. In this meeting, the Chair and administrators describe the administrative structure of the Department, each of their roles within that structure, and the supports that are in place to guide new faculty and staff. This meeting is in addition to the standard CUMC and MSPH orientations, and takes place quarterly. All new faculty and staff who have joined in the preceding quarter are included in this one-hour session.
- An Epidemiology Welcome Binder that includes a welcome letter from the Department Chair, important onboarding instructions for HR and benefits, the Epidemiology brochure, Strategic Plan, and a description of our cluster structure. The Welcome Binder also contains campus maps, advice about where to eat on and near campus, directories, our Guide to Administration, our most recent Annual Report, and a sample issue of Two by Two, the Department of Epidemiology Newsletter.

## Clarifying teaching and service expectations

In February 2011 we clarified teaching and service expectations for faculty in the Department. Although these expectations by necessity are always fluid because the Department, the School, and the world around us are constantly changing, we have endeavored over the past year to ensure that all faculty are equally compensated for their teaching and service contributions. It is our goal to continue to ensure that faculty compensation is fair and equitable. Ultimately, this is a research-heavy department. As such we have much less onerous teaching requirements than other departments, and we have more generous allotment of seminar leaders than other departments.

## Students

We have been particularly focused this year on enhancing the student experience, with improved communications about awards, career, and student life; new relationships established between the doctoral and master's student communities; a doctoral seminar series on grants to support dissertation work; and offering financial support for research endeavors. These efforts are bearing fruit.

### Doctoral-master's liaison

With the aim of getting master's trainees exposed to greater opportunities and better acquainted with other students and faculty, the Department began a doctoral-master's student liaison program led by two of our doctoral students, Ms. Catherine Richards and Ms. Carolyn Herzig.

As student liaisons, Ms. Richards and Ms. Herzig focus on enriching the social and academic experiences of master's students within the Department. To that end, they devise and organize events particularly suited to the needs of master's students. In addition, they are available to address specific questions that arise and, when appropriate, refer students to available resources.

The doctoral-master's student liaisons are already serving a vital role, having helped to inaugurate the Master's Student Journal Club. They also hosted a scientific poster project help workshop for master's students, in anticipation of our upcoming Master's Students' upcoming poster session.



### EPIC fund

This year the Department established the EPIC Fund, created to provide our trainees with an opportunity to access resources beyond those covered by their standard tuition, with the goal of advancing their educational agenda. The EPIC fund is drawn from revenue generated by our annual summer institute, EPIC. Trainees apply for funding for such things as travel; purchase of datasets or samples for a study; and expenses for short workshops, software packages, or training in lab techniques. The first funding cycle of applications took place in October. Thirteen applications were received and six were awarded a total of \$9,560. The next funding cycle will be in January 2012. The EPIC fund description and application is available in the Summer 2011 Two by Two on pages 33 and 34 as Appendix 2.

### For Students, a Guide to Everything

This summer we unveiled a special end-of-summer supplement to our regular Two by Two publication called "For Students: A Guide to Everything" for all of our trainees, packed with information and peppered with advice from faculty and current students.

The publication provides in one place materials to help our trainees make the very most of their academic experience, with a compendium of useful lists, tips, and tools to which they can continue to turn over the course of the year.

The guide includes a list of the requirements of both the doctoral and master's program, biographies of our new doctoral students, and descriptions of the master's thesis and practicum, with infographics on the location and sites at which sectors students are placed. Also included is useful information to help students navigate campus life, including information on how to become a seminar leader, how to obtain financial support through the EPIC fund, and conferences of potential interest to trainees. The Guide to Everything is available in the Summer 2011 Two by Two in Appendix 2.



## SER student prize

The Department inaugurated an award for best student abstracts submitted to the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) conference, the premier epidemiologic research meeting. The prize is awarded to two trainees and covers travel to the annual North American Congress of Epidemiology and the SER Conference.

This year, the SER student awards went to graduating master's student Ms. Nadine Straka (first prize for "Fetal growth is a significant predictor of semen quality") and post-doctoral trainee Dr. Brandon Marshall (second prize for "Methamphetamine use increases the risk of attempted suicide among injection drug users: A prospective cohort study").



## F31 preparation seminar

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. The 6 session series is designed for second and third year doctoral students in epidemiology planning to submit F31 grants or R36 applications for dissertation funding in 2011-2012. It provides 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. The F31 seminar series culminates 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.



## Master's student journal club<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 2011, at the inspiration of master's student Patrick Dawson and with the support of doctoral-master's liaisons Ms. Catherine Richards and Ms. Carolyn Herzig, the Master's Student Journal Club was launched. The journal club gives students the opportunity to discuss recent and important papers in Epidemiology. On a given Wednesday afternoon, a master's student leads a group of his or her peers in a roundtable discussion on a number of different topics, such as obesity and neighborhood food environments, Afghanistan war veterans' mental health treatment, or prevention of HIV infection with early anti-retroviral therapy.

### 1 Among the articles reviewed by the Journal Club this year were:

Cohen MS, Chen YQ, McCauley M, Gamble T, Hosseinipour MC, Kumarasamy N, Hakim JG, Kumwenda J, Grinsztejn B, Pilotto JH, Godbole SV, Mehendale S, Chariyalertsak S, Santos BR, Mayer KH, Hoffman IF, Eshleman SH, Piwowar-Manning E, Wang L, Makhema J, Mills LA, de Bruyn G, Sanne I, Eron J, Gallant J, Havlir D, Swindells S, Ribaud H, Elharrar V, Burns D, Taha TE, Nielsen-Saines K, Celentano D, Essex M, Fleming TR; HPTN 052 Study Team. Prevention of HIV-1 infection with early antiretroviral therapy. *N Engl J Med*. 2011 Aug 11;365(6):493-505.

Maguen S, Ren L, Bosch JO, Marmar CR, Seal KH. Gender differences in mental health diagnoses among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans enrolled in veterans affairs health care. *Am J Public Health*. 2010 Dec;100(12):2450-6.

Rundle A, Neckerman KM, Freeman L, Lovasi GS, Purciel M, Quinn J, Richards C, Sircar N, Weiss C. Neighborhood food environment and walkability predict obesity in New York City. *Environ Health Perspect*. 2009 Mar;117(3):442-7.

Mandelblatt JS, Cronin KA, Bailey S, Berry DA, de Koning HJ, Draisma G, Huang H, Lee SJ, Munsell M, Plevritis SK, Ravdin P, Schechter CB, Sigal B, Stoto MA, Stout NK, van Ravesteyn NT, Venier J, Zelen M, Feuer EJ; Breast Cancer Working Group of the Cancer Intervention and Surveillance Modeling Network. Effects of mammography screening under different screening schedules: model estimates of potential benefits and harms. *Ann Intern Med*. 2009 Nov 17;151(10):738-47.

## Staff

We have enhanced communications among and between staff and faculty in order to help ensure strong and nimble administrative functioning and receive consistent feedback about Department operations. Two of our most important initiatives in this area have been our quarterly staff Pizza Friday meetings and the implementation of a clear, consistent yearly performance appraisal process for administrative officers.

### Pizza Fridays

The Pizza Friday program was inaugurated in February of 2011. Four times over the course of the year, administrative, support, technical and casual staff gather to share a pizza lunch and talk about how to make our work better, easier and more efficient through communication and skill sharing. Staff members introduce themselves, learn about the work of their colleagues, review administrative guidelines, provide honest feedback and suggestions, and engage in open discussion about challenges in the workplace. The feedback gained in this year's meetings helped to shape our administrative policies and procedures, clarify our financial and communications functions, and improve our new faculty and staff on-boarding process. Perhaps most important, it allowed co-workers to understand and appreciate each other's work and the work of the Department, and has created an open pipeline for feedback and suggestions to the Chair's office. In 2012, Pizza Fridays will further engage all staff in an intensive review our Department's policies and practices around grants and finance, and set new goals and standards to be achieved by the close of the year.



### Officer performance appraisals

The Department of Epidemiology aims to assure the fair, proactive, and consistent oversight of all staff and to encourage skill building, personal development, and collaboration. The officer of administration performance appraisal process can help us to forward those goals by providing a critical opportunity for individual assessment and feedback; encouraging the consideration of each officer's personal and career development; shining a light on the roles played by officers on their projects, within their clusters, and in the Department as a whole.

In order to optimize our officer performance appraisal process, the Chair's office invested in developing an appraisal process to be used for all officers of administration in the clusters. A number of steps were taken to make the process as straightforward as possible for faculty supervisors. As in the past, faculty supervisors conducted the appraisals directly with their officer staff, but they did so with active support from their respective SCAs and from the Department's human resources team.

A clear process that incorporated the perspectives of both the faculty supervisor and the SCA was implemented. Care was taken to ensure the most equitable, even handed appraisal preparation and delivery process across the Department. Additional background and support was provided to supervisors and SCAs about ratings standards and overall performance management.

The resulting performance appraisal process was exceptionally smooth, and for the first time ever, Epidemiology was first among all Mailman departments to complete it. We anticipate that the 2012 process will be even faster and smoother, particularly given the more firmly established cluster structure and the ability of SCAs and supervisors to reference electronic copies of the previous appraisals in preparing the current ones.





## Staff training and development

The Department of Epidemiology aims to assure that officers of administration and support staff members have opportunities to grow and improve in their jobs and to enhance their future career options. This year we made a special effort to encourage staff members to explore the numerous training resources available at Columbia and to encourage supervisors to allow them the time to pursue these opportunities. The Department created a formal application for staff to apply for fee-based courses to improve their skills and work performance, and has set aside funds to support this. The application form is available as part of the June 2011 Two by Two on pages 19 and 20 as Appendix 2.

### Guide to Administration

This year, we continued to expand on the administrative guide we developed last year. The Guide to Administration offers a comprehensive description of the policies and procedures around the most critical functions of the Department. Our updated version includes a guide on promoting events to the MSPH and larger CUMC community and information for staff about accessing training and other career development opportunities. The most recent Guide to Administration is available as Appendix 3.



## Department operations

### Space

For the first time in the Department's history all primary faculty are in the same building. Our faculty now occupy the 5th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 15th and 16th floors of the Allan Rosenfield Building. This gives us a comfortable level of space for our faculty and staff, as well as room to grow.

We have also invested in some long overdue infrastructural renovations, centrally redoing the 7th floor conference room, the core of much of the Department's formal activity, 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 conversation

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We continue to invest in our communications efforts. We have done this over the past year with our popular newsletter Two by Two and several successful events that have helped to put the Department of Epidemiology on the map across the University as a hub for scientific innovation and discussion.

## External and internal communications

Through our communication efforts we aim to inform and to educate about the latest epidemiologic findings, and to contribute to the broader conversation in the discipline.

### Two by Two

Two by Two, the Department's bimonthly newsletter, came into its second year in 2011. The newsletter continues to serve as an organ for communicating news internally and to the wider university. This year, it also expanded its editorial content to include a reported series called "Giants among Us," about distinguished members of our faculty, and "In the News," a chronicle of faculty research and achievements that are covered by major media outlets." Two by Two has continued to have special issue themes. In 2011, we focused on the international engagement of our Department, on our innovative programs, careers in epidemiology, and student achievements. In the summer, we included a comprehensive "Guide to Everything" for our students

In 2012 Two by Two will enter its third year, with plans afoot for enhancing the newsletter, potentially extending into digital space to provide us with an opportunity for more timely dissemination of cutting edge scientific findings.

### Week N

The Department Chair continues to communicate every week to faculty, staff, and students through Week N, an email summarizing awards, events, and new faculty and staff appointments, and other news of the past week and noting events and deadlines in the week ahead. Providing a consistent communications stream, Week N consolidates the Chair's communication to the Department to one weekly email.

### Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER)

In 2011 the Department continued to encourage active participation in premier meetings relevant to our work. In particular we focused on the June 2011 North American Congress of Epidemiology and annual SER conference in Montreal. The Department had a great showing, with faculty and fellows chairing or presenting at six different symposia and spotlight sessions. Additionally, over 20 posters were presented by every level of the Department's community, from incoming master's students to faculty. Epidemiology Chair Dr. Sandro Galea began his term as SER president-elect at this conference, and his term as president will begin in 2012.

The Department also hosted its second annual Alumni and Friends Reception during the SER meeting. Nearly 100 faculty and students, alumni, and colleagues from various institutions filled the room enjoying the specialties of Montreal and Canada while socializing throughout the night.

In 2012 we will continue this focus, and expand our presence at other key epidemiology conferences.

## TWO BY TWO



### Facebook and Twitter

The Department continues to build on its web presence through social media use. We maintain active Facebook and Twitter accounts that publicize events, noteworthy faculty publications, and other news.

Visit us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/cuepidemiology](https://www.facebook.com/cuepidemiology)

And on Twitter:  
[twitter.com/cuepidemiology](https://twitter.com/cuepidemiology)



DR. MARGARET HAMBURG, U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION COMMISSIONER, SPEAKS AT THE 9/11+10 CONFERENCE.

## Events

Over the last 2 years we have significantly increased the number of events around our Department including 2 lecture series and regular seminars in each of our clusters. This year we also held several special events, most notably a conference on the state of science, policy, and public health at the ten year anniversary of September 11.

### 9/11+10

To revisit the public health lessons from the September 11, 2001 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 disaster preparedness.

Speakers included U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. Margaret Hamburg and Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Nicole Lurie, among others.

The event drew guests from across the Columbia campus, as well as from the broader health community, including representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the American Red Cross. An additional 800 participants tuned into the live video stream of the event. The day's presentations can be viewed at [ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/911.html](http://ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/911.html).

### Disability symposium

The Epidemiology Innovation Cluster held a successful daylong symposium in June called "Moving Beyond Mortality: Disability as a Population Measure." The purpose of the event was to discuss the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health and the opportunities and challenges the classification poses as a population based measure of disability. Topics included cutting edge research measuring physical disability, particularly in aging, mental health perspectives on functioning and disabilities, and identifying childhood disability in low-income countries. Disability research is relevant to several of the clusters and research groups in the Department, and the epidemiology innovation cluster aims to grow this research area as one of its core foci.

### A Plague of Prisons

The Department hosted a book party, with the Dean's office, honoring the fall 2011 release of Dr. Ernest Drucker's important book *A Plague of Prisons: The Epidemiology of Mass Incarceration in America*. An Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology in the Department, Dr. Drucker's book takes the unique approach of examining the United States' prison explosion through an epidemiologic lens. The event was a wonderful success and a chance to spotlight an important work from one of our own.

## Master's student day

On October 28th the second year master's students presented their practicum work at the first annual Master's Student's Poster Session in the Riverview Lounge. The posters were judged by a faculty panel, and the top three students presented their work at our regularly scheduled Department Seminar immediately following the Poster Session. Mr. Patrick Dawson was awarded first place for "The epidemiology of tuberculosis among New Yorkers living in public housing, 2001-2009,". Ms. Ashleigh McGirr took second place with "Assessing the effects of human behavior in distributing post exposure prophylaxis: a computer simulation approach." There were two third place winners, Dr. Rhea Powell for "Does genetic ancestry modify the relationship of smoking to lung function? The MESA Lung Study," and Ms. Sarah Reber, "Child protection systems and outcomes in Northern Uganda." The abstracts, along with the list of the winners of the poster contest that day, were published in the December 2011 issue of Two by Two in Appendix 2.

The day wrapped up with a reception to honor our students.

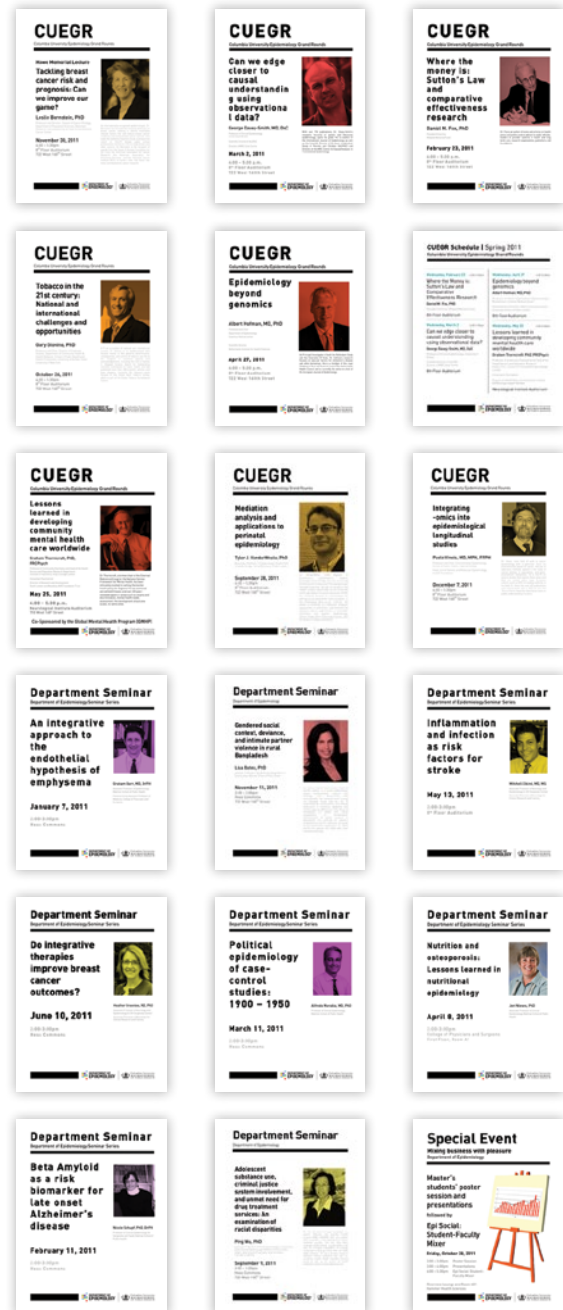




## CUEGRs and Department Seminars

For the second year, our Columbia University Epidemiology Grand Rounds (CUEGRs) brought global leaders in epidemiology to Columbia to share their groundbreaking work. CUEGR lectures present on a broad range of topics and foster academic exchange around key issues in epidemiology. In addition the series helps forge important links between the Department and leading figures and programs in epidemiology throughout the world. CUEGR speakers in 2011 included Dr. George Davey Smith, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Bristol; Scientific Director of the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children; and Director of the MRC Caite Centre. Dr. Davey Smith's provocative talk was titled "Can we edge closer to causal understanding using observational data?" Dr. Paolo Vineis, Professor and Chair in Environmental Epidemiology at the School of Public Health at Imperial College, London and Head of the Unit of Genetic and Molecular Epidemiology at the HuGeF Foundation, delivered an innovative presentation focused on, "Integrating -omics into epidemiological longitudinal studies." For a full listing of our 2011 CUEGRs and Department Seminars, see Appendix 4.

We also continued to hold our monthly Department Seminars. These seminars showcase the research and work being done by faculty and students in the Department.



# Achievements

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2011 has been a productive year for our faculty, with significant achievements in all of our research areas of strength, from infectious disease to lifecourse epidemiology. Not a small number of these findings have been truly groundbreaking and have been suitably recognized with awards in the field.

American Journal of  
Epidemiology

American Journal of  
**PUBLIC  
HEALTH**

The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

**JAMA**

The Journal of the American Medical Association

**THE LANCET**

International Journal of  
Epidemiology

## Papers

Our faculty authored over 700 papers this year, many of which were published in leading journals like the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, the *International Journal of Epidemiology*, *JAMA*, *Lancet*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and the *American Journal of Public Health*. The range of epidemiologic subjects that these studies covered makes a strong statement about our comprehensive, “cells-to-society” public health approach. This past year, faculty studies found that Hepatitis C originated in dogs, showed that American Latinos are under-using mental health services, revealed that the common household chemical phthalates can affect children’s developmental skills as early as age 3, and indicated that a significant portion of those who witnessed the September 11 attacks had symptoms of PTSD. Studies also showed that frequent business travelers are more prone to obesity, that 1 in 26 people will develop epilepsy in their lifetime, and that women will discontinue cancer medication because of high copays. Appendix 5 provides a full bibliography of faculty papers published in 2011.

A sign of the relevance our faculty’s research has in the wider public health community and to the general population, many of these studies received media coverage in outlets like *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, and *Reuters*.



## Awards

This year, our faculty were recognized with several of the most prestigious honors and titles in our field.

A full bibliography and list of awards is available as Appendix 6. A sampling is provided below.

**Dr. Magdalena Cerdá**, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, won the American Psychopathological Association's 11th Annual **Robins/Guze Award** for promising research being conducted in psychiatric epidemiology by a junior investigator.

Professor of Clinical Epidemiology **Dr. Salim Abdool Karim** and Associate Professor of Clinical Epidemiology **Quarraisha Abdool Karim** were recipients of the 2011 **Allan Rosenfield Alumni Award for Excellence** recognizing their recent landmark study demonstrating the efficacy of a microbicide for women to prevent HIV infection.

**Dr. Mady Hornig**, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, and **Dr. W. Ian Lipkin**, the John Snow Professor of Epidemiology, were selected for the 2011 **Charles C. Shepard Science Awards** for their co-authorship of the publication "Epidemiologic investigation of immune-mediated polyradiculoneuropathy among abattoir workers exposed to porcine brain," which was cited as the best manuscript or original research published in a peer-reviewed journal by scientists working at CDC or Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

**Dr. Ezra Susser**, Professor of Epidemiology and Psychiatry, was awarded the American Public Health Association's 2011 **Rema Lapouse Award** for outstanding contributions to the scientific understanding of the epidemiology and control of mental disorders.

Professor Emerita **Dr. Barbara Barlow** was awarded the 2011 **CDC Foundation Hero Award**.

**Dr. Deborah A. Hasin**, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, was the recipient of the **Jellinek Memorial Award** for 2011, one of the highest honors given in the field of alcohol research.

**Dr. Karestan Koenen**, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, was elected president of the **International Society for Traumatic Stress (ISTSS)** for a term that starts in fall of 2012.

Our students were also suitably decorated with awards, both from outside organizations and from the Mailman School.

**Dustin Carpenter, MPH '11**, has been awarded the 2011 **Best Paper Award for the Injury Control and Emergency Health Services Section of the APHA**. His winning paper was adapted from his thesis on road safety, titled "Graduated driver license night-time compliance in US teen drivers involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes."

**Ms. Laura Stadelmann, MPH '11**, received the **Epidemiology Section Award from the American Public Health Association** for her abstract "Comparing models of HIV transmission risk on concurrent HIV/AIDS diagnosis using multiple imputation and other methods for handling missing risk data, New York City 2008."

Watch this space

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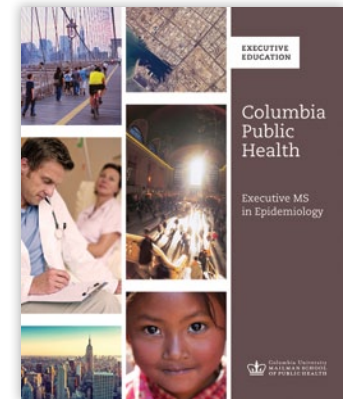
Some of our most exciting initiatives for the coming year are in the area of our academic degree programs. We are offering a new Executive Master's of Science program, and we are refocusing our Doctorate in Public Health. We also will continue to recruit outstanding faculty to the Department.

## Executive MS fall 2012

We will launch the Executive MS in Epidemiology in fall of 2012 as the newest among the Department's degree programs. Recognizing that prospective trainees today often want to keep their fulltime jobs while earning advanced credentials, the degree provides the same rigorous research training as our full-time MS but on a schedule that accommodates working professionals. Classes will meet one weekend per month for 22 months, with a break in July and August of the first year.

We expect that our applicants will be highly motivated professionals who work in health departments, academic settings, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, and other health-care settings in the US and abroad.

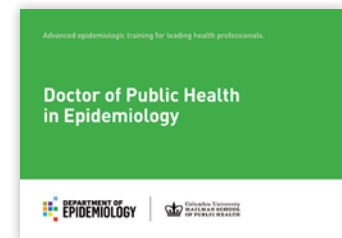
Promotional materials including a brochure and journal advertisements, have already been created for the program, and we are carrying out a coordinated outreach campaign to a large group of potential students.



## DrPH fall 2012

We are re-focusing our DrPH in Epidemiology degree to target clinicians and public health professionals with an MPH or 3 or more years of work experience, who want to acquire advanced knowledge and skills in epidemiologic research methods.

The curriculum requires students to take the core competencies in epidemiology methods while tailoring the remainder of their course work to further their individual career goals as public health leaders or clinical epidemiologists. Graduates will be prepared to lead population studies in research or practice settings.



## Ongoing faculty recruitment

We are continuing our active recruitment of stellar faculty and anticipate that we will add four new faculty members to the Department over the course of 2012.



# Appendices

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Appendix 1	Strategic Plan, 2010-2011
Appendix 2	Two by Twos in 2011
Appendix 3	Guide to Administration
Appendix 4	CUEGRs and Department Seminars in 2011
Appendix 5	Bibliography of Faculty Papers in 2011
Appendix 6	Faculty and Student Awards in 2011
Appendix 7	Epidemiology Guide to Appointments and Promotions

To view the appendices, please visit:

[mailman.columbia.edu/academic-departments/epidemiology/annual-report-2011](http://mailman.columbia.edu/academic-departments/epidemiology/annual-report-2011)







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