

DEPARTMENTAL WEBSITE 2011

The [Epidemiology and Biostatistics website](#) is now updated for 2011 with information from the departmental Annual Report. Still more updates are needed to make our website current. Please submit your updated content including:

- ❖ Staff Profiles (All Staff)
- ❖ Current Research Interests
- ❖ Selected Publications (Faculty and Research Staff)
- ❖ Photo Updates

Please contact Rick Church (x58180) to submit your website content and to schedule portraits taken by the MSKCC photographer.

THIRD NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

Montreal, Canada June 21st-24th, 2011
<http://www.epicongress2011.org>

As co-chair of the meeting, [Jonine Bernstein, PhD](#), invites you to attend the Third North American Congress of Epidemiology. More than 20 epidemiologic societies and over 100 Congress Faculty are involved in sponsoring and planning this event. Our purpose is to showcase and promote the diversity of study, practice and policy within Epidemiology and to identify areas of commonality across different substantive areas of the field.

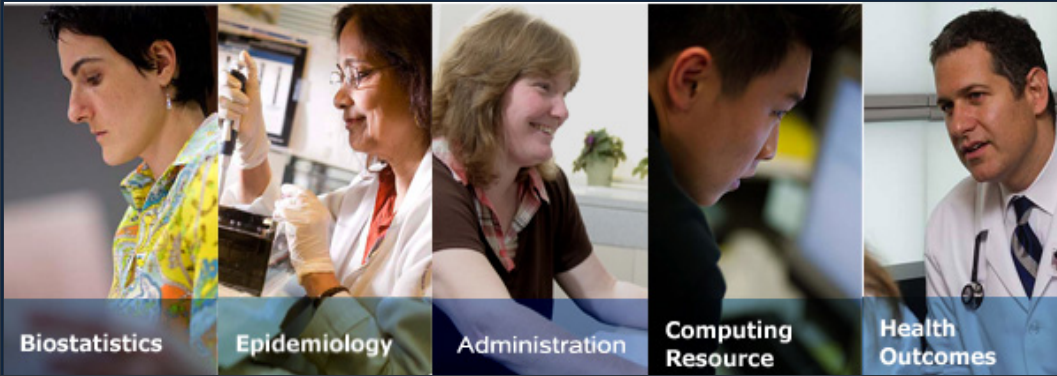
You can look forward to hearing the nine interactive plenary addresses presented by visionary leaders such as Patricia Buffler, Ward Cates, John Frank, Muin Khoury, Jonathan Samet, and Allen Wilcox. There will be 4 Symposia sessions containing over 35 topics including [Ann Zauber's](#) chaired session entitled, "*When Epidemiology Meets Policy: Controversies in Translating Evidence-Based Cancer Screening Decisions to the Media, Policy Markers and Clinicians.*" Also, attend the 4 Spotlight sessions containing 33 topics chosen from the nearly 1,300 abstract submissions. These Spotlight sessions include [Colin Begg's](#) chaired session entitled, "*Cancer Risk Heterogeneity Within Anatomic Sites*" and [Malcolm Pike's](#) chaired session entitled, "*Some Issues in Breast and Ovarian Cancer Etiology and Treatment.*" Lastly, visit the poster sessions illustrating hundreds of top-rated scientist and student abstracts.

Early-bird Registration ends April 20th!

Please sign up for one of the 14 half-day workshops as soon as possible since slots are filling up! In addition, please join us for the social event, the unique Montreal circus arts experience that promises to be a memorable evening. Also, please make your hotel reservations as rooms are limited. Visit the registration page for meeting fees and how to sign up for the event:

<http://www.epicongress2011.org/reginfo.html>

We look forward to seeing you in Montreal June 21st-24th, 2011!



DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Colin Begg, PhD

EDITORS

Sharon Bayuga, MPH
Rick Church, MPH
Brian Denton, MS
Joshua Mirkin
Brendan Phalan

LI-XUAN QIN GRANT AWARD

[Li-Xuan Qin, PhD](#), was awarded an NIH Research Project Grant (R01) for her study *Statistical Methods for Normalizing Microarrays in Cancer Biomarker Studies*. This work focuses on analyzing data from microRNA expression arrays. MicroRNA arrays contain only a few hundred microRNAs and a large proportion are likely to be differentially expressed between diverse tumor groups. In contrast to normalization methods developed for gene expression arrays, which assume few or symmetric differentially expressed genes between sample groups, there has been no systematic study of the properties of these methods in normalizing microRNA expression arrays utilizing heterogeneous samples such as tumors. The assessment of normalization methods in this setting is difficult because of the lack of a benchmark dataset. Li-Xuan's study proposes to design and generate such benchmark datasets, perform a systematic assessment of normalization methods with a particular emphasis on the utility of these models for detecting markers with differential expression, and from the benchmark data derive statistical models that acknowledge heterogeneities inherent to tumor samples.



Li-Xuan Qin, PhD

SHARI GOLDFARB RECEIVES YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD

The Gabrielle's Angel Foundation for Cancer Research recently awarded [Shari Goldfarb, MD](#), a young investigator award to support her longitudinal protocol evaluating sexual and reproductive health of breast cancer patients and survivors. The goal of this research is to better understand the impact of cancer treatment on reproductive and sexual health from diagnosis through treatment into survivorship. Patients' sexual function will be monitored over a 5-year period and the patients will be randomized to interventions based on their level of dysfunction and distress. The study will characterize the sexual dysfunction by patient and treatment characteristics, and document factors that influence decisions regarding fertility preservation.



Shari Goldfarb, MD

SARA OLSON GRANT AWARD

[Sara Olson, PhD](#), was awarded a U01 grant for her project "*Serum IgE and risk of pancreatic cancer.*" While allergies such as hay fever have been consistently found to be related to a reduced risk of pancreatic cancer, the biologic basis of this association is not well understood. The specific aim of this study is to investigate the association of pre-diagnostic levels of total IgE, respiratory allergen-specific IgE, and food allergen-specific IgE with the risk of pancreatic cancer. Sara will test the hypothesis that higher levels of total IgE, respiratory allergen-specific IgE, and food allergen-specific IgE are associated with reduced risk. This will be undertaken using a nested case-control study within the large prospective Prostate, Lung, Colorectal, and Ovarian (PLCO) Cancer Screening Trial, utilizing serum taken up to 15 years before the development of disease, and will provide estimates of risk unlikely to be influenced by presence of disease. This study will be undertaken in collaboration with investigators at NCI and UCSF.



Sara Olson, PhD

Sara Olson was also elected to the Steering Committee of the international Pancreatic Cancer Case-Control consortium, PanC4.

UPCOMING SEMINARS

BIOSTATISTICS SEMINARS

- ❖ **April 6, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **Michael Jones**
University of Iowa
- ❖ **April 13, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **Li-Xuan Qin**
Assistant Attending Biostatistician
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
- ❖ **April 20, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **Andrew Vickers**
Associate Attending Research
Methodologist
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
- ❖ **April 27, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **Hormuzd Katki**
National Institutes of Health
- ❖ **May 4, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **Ronglai Shen**
Assistant Attending Biostatistician
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
- ❖ **May 11, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **David Dunson**
Duke University
- ❖ **May 18, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **Sujata Patil**
Assistant Attending Biostatistician
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
- ❖ **May 25, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **Marinela Capanu**
Assistant Attending Biostatistician
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

EPIDEMIOLOGY SEMINARS

- ❖ **April 19, 2011 @12:00 PM**
Seminar by **Ann Zauber**
Associate Attending Biostatistician
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
- ❖ **April 26, 2011 @ 12:00 PM**
Seminar by **Mary Schooling**
Associate Professor of Epidemiology
CUNY School of Public Health at Hunter
College

PCPR SEMINARS

- ❖ **May 10, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**
Seminar by **Susan E. Hankinson, ScD**
Epidemiologist
Brigham and Women's Hospital

CRG CORNER

The Clinical Research Database (CRDB) runs on three platforms including CRDB Client, CRDB Web, and CRDBi. The Computer Resource Group (CRG) introduced forms, reports, and additional data collection tools, including:

- ❖ Clinical Genetics
- ❖ Dosimetry
- ❖ Pharmacokinetics
- ❖ Ludwig Lab Visit
- ❖ Ludwig Data Export

CRDBi is the web client platform of the Clinical Research Database. The release version is currently CRDBi 1.23.1

IN THE NEWS

- ❖ *The New York Times* has published six essays by [Peter Bach, MD](#), in what will be a seven-part series about his wife's breast cancer. In these essays, Dr. Bach discusses cancer care, through diagnosis, testing, treatment, and clinical trials, from the perspective of a spouse. He relates how everything from diagnostic testing to statistics previously considered understood from the viewpoint of a physician and researcher can seem incredibly foreign. The essays have appeared weekly on Tuesdays, since February 21st, on *The New York Times* Well Blog. In addition, two installments have been published in the print edition of the Science Times section.
- ❖ [Andrew Vickers, PhD](#), published a paper in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* demonstrating that changes in PSA are not a reliable indicator for prostate cancer in men whose PSA is low. The paper gained considerable press attention, including *The New York Times* and NPR.



PRESENTATION

- ❖ [Quincy Mo, PhD](#), received a travel award to present his work on next generation sequencing data analysis at a contributed session on bioinformatics at the Fourth Annual Bayesian Biostatistics Conference at the MD Anderson Cancer Center. The title of his presentation is [A Fully Bayesian Hidden Ising Model for ChIP-seq Data Analysis](#). His work is currently under review by a statistical journal.

PUBLICATION

- ❖ In a paper to be published in an upcoming issue of the *International Journal of Cancer*, [Irene Orlow, PhD](#), and her coauthors demonstrated a significant correlation between SNPs in the vitamin D receptor gene and increased risk for developing subsequent primary melanomas. This case-control study enrolled 3,676 subjects and represents the largest study of vitamin D receptor polymorphisms in melanoma to date.

Orlow I, Roy P, Reiner AS, Yoo S, Patel H, Paine S, Armstrong BK, Krickler A, Marrett LD, Millikan RC, Thomas NE, Gruber SB, Anton-Culver H, Rosso S, Gallagher RP, Dwyer T, Kanetsky PA, Busam K, From L, Begg CB, Berwick M, for the GEM Study Group. [Vitamin D receptor polymorphisms in patients with cutaneous melanoma](#). *International Journal of Cancer*. 2011, In Press.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please join us in welcoming our new staff!

- ❖ **Natalie Barragan**, Project Coordinator, Health Outcomes Group
Natalie holds a BA in International Relations with a minor in Public Health from Boston University, and is enrolled in a master's program at NYU Wagner. Prior to coming to MSKCC, she worked at Medicare Rights Center as a Health Advocacy Enrollment Associate and Caseworker. Natalie works with **Ethan Basch** and coordinates his research operations.
- ❖ **Yasmeen Majoka**, Research Secretary, Epidemiology Service
Yasmeen holds a BA in Biology with a minor in Anthropology from Boston University. Prior to coming to MSKCC, she worked at the Women's Health Center at Jamaica Hospital Medical Center as an Ambulatory Care Representative. Yasmeen joins the Administrative team and works with the Epidemiology investigators.
- ❖ **Romina Rodriguez**, Research Secretary, Health Outcomes Group
Romina holds a BA in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from Baruch College. In addition to her work at MSKCC, she continues to promote health wellness and education as a Community Liaison for the Clinical and Translational Science Center of Weill Cornell Medical College. Romina joins the Administrative team and works with the Health Outcomes investigators.
- ❖ **Eve Burstein**, Research Study Assistant, Epidemiology Service
Eve holds a BA in Psychology from Yale University, with a concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience. She will be working primarily with **Malcolm Pike**.



RECENT STAFF PROMOTIONS

- ❖ **Joseph Christoff**, Project Coordinator, Administration
- ❖ **Lauren Rogak, MA**, Research Project Coordinator, Health Outcomes Group
- ❖ **Laura Sit**, Clinical Research Coordinator, Health Outcomes Group

[BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE MSKCC EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM!](#)