



BIOSTATISTICS SEMINARS

- ❖ March 20, 2024 Haiyan Zheng
- ❖ March 27, 2024 Begum Bektas
- ❖ April 3, 2024 Ana Ortega-Villa
- ❖ April 10, 2024 Michiels Stefan
- ❖ April 17, 2024 Glenn Heller
- ❖ May 8, 2024 Wei Sun

COMPUTATIONAL ONCOLOGY SEMINARS

- ❖ March 19, 2024 TBD
- ❖ April 16, 2024 TBD
- ❖ May 21, 2024 TBD
- ❖ June 18, 2024 Ben Raphael

EPIDEMIOLOGY SERVICE MEETINGS

- ❖ March 11, 2024 Kushal Dey
- ❖ April 8, 2024 Xiang Shu
- ❖ April 22, 2024 Ann Zauber
- ❖ May 13, 2024 Marc Gunter

POPULATION SCIENCES RESEARCH PROGRAM SEMINAR SERIES

- ❖ March 19, 2024 Joseph Ravenell
- ❖ May 21, 2024 David Chambers
- ❖ June 18, 2024 Lorna McNeil

HEALTH OUTCOMES RESEARCH GROUP SEMINARS

- ❖ March 21, 2024 Michael Kyle
- ❖ April 18, 2024 Megan Caram
- ❖ May 16, 2024 Talya Salz



DEPARTMENT CHAIR - Colin Begg, PhD

EDITORS
Shireen Lewis, MPA
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Sonia Persaud, MPH
Hannah Fuchs, MSPH
Charlie White, MS
Megan Mills, MFA
Richard Koppelaar
Joseph Kanik

A VISIT WITH OUR FRIEND – HOWARD THALER

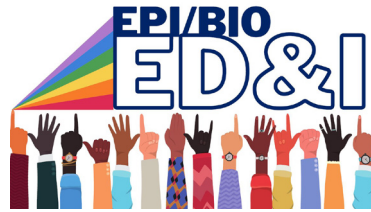
In early February, a group of us (**Colin, Mithat, Venkat, and Glenn**) traveled to Crown Heights to visit our friend and former colleague, Howard (Tzvi) Thaler. Howard joined the Department in the mid-1970's (around the same time as **Ann Zauber!**) and spent his entire career at MSK, retiring in 2016. He had an incisive knowledge of statistics and was renowned for asking challenging questions of seminar speakers! For many years he led the Biostatistics Consulting Service.



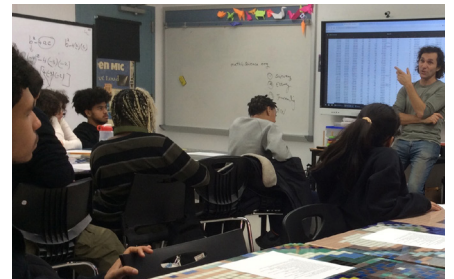
Despite facing the challenges of ALS, Howard's resilience and unwavering spirit were evident throughout our two-hour visit at his home. As Howard has difficulties articulating due to his illness, two of his daughters assisted in communication; we shared moments of laughter, reminisced about his time in the department, and learned that he has in the neighborhood of 30 grandchildren! While ALS has impacted Howard's physical abilities, his sense of humor, kind spirit, and soul shone brightly. The light in his eyes and his evident delight at our visit were ever present and it is what nourished us on a memorable and bittersweet afternoon.

ED&I CORNER

- ED&I hosted the forum titled "Addressing Bias in Clinical Prediction Tools" on November 2nd with four panelists: Dr. **Andrew Vickers** (Epi-Bio), **Dr. Wesley Tansley** (Epi-Bio), and Drs. Sahussapont Sirintrapun and Natalia Summerville from MSK's bias committee.
 - The forum also provided support for a Biostatistics seminar led by **Dr. Kay See Tan** on the use of race/ethnicity variables in research.



- In concordance with the department's outreach initiatives to underserved communities, **Dr. Andrew Vickers** spoke to students in mid-January at Middle College High School in Queens.
 - This outreach is also part of an external organization called Math4Science, in which students are introduced to STEM fields with an aim to diversify the number of people entering these fields, while also helping students learn and enjoy math (<https://math4science.org/>).



- Be aware of the new accessibility icons and instructions (see below) sent with all departmental seminars (both in-person and hybrid).
 - Please reach out to the ED&I committee when an accommodation is needed: zzPDL_EpiBio_CulturalComm@mskcc.org
 - The ED&I Committee advises seminar planning teams to ask speakers in advance about any accommodations needed.



- Check out the ED&I Yammer page for news! <https://web.yammer.com/main/groups/eyJfdHlwZSI6Ikdya3VwliwiaWQjOiixMzA5MDQ0NTcyMTYifQ>
- Lastly, we'd like to congratulate **Christy Rajcoomar** on becoming the committee's new co-chair! We are excited to see the work that **Christy, Gordie**, and the committee will do in the coming months!
- Please reach out to **Gordie** (wattg@mskcc.org) or **Christy** (rajcoomc@mskcc.org) if you would like to get more involved in the Epi-Bio ED&I Committee.

EPI/BIO COMMUNITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

2024 has been filled with fun activities so far!

PAST EVENTS

This past Thursday, February 29th, was the once in every four-year event, Leap Day! To celebrate this special calendar day the Epi/Bio Community Building Committee hosted a Leap Day Party. There were games, snacks, a time capsule, and a themed baking contest! The time capsule was filled with memories to be opened and celebrated again at the next Leap Day event in four years. Meanwhile, the baking competition was delicious. Congratulations to **Irene Orlow** for winning the baking competition, and to **Mohammad Yosofvand** who was the trivia champion! It was a wonderful event filled with the joy of good company, eating creative baked goods, and participating in Leap Day themed activities. We look forward to seeing everyone again in another four years!



UPCOMING EVENTS

BOOK CLUB

Please join us on Tuesday, April 2nd at 4pm for the upcoming Epi Bio Book Club where we'll discuss Julia: A Retelling of George Orwell's 1984 by Sandra Newman. We hope to see you there!



CYCLE FOR SURVIVAL 2024

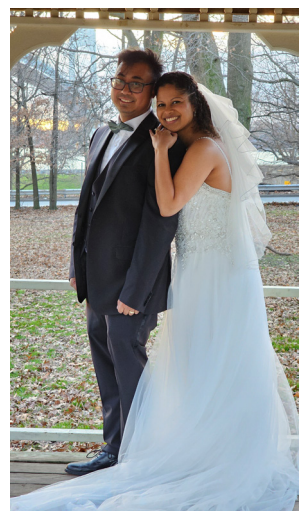
Cycle for Survival is the movement to beat rare cancers. The Epi/Bio department's team, Team Bell Curve, is set to ride on Friday, March 8th from 5:00PM to 9:00PM. 100% of every dollar raised will go directly to innovative research and clinical trials, benefiting people worldwide. Every donation makes a difference. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift today.

Click here to access the Team Bell Curve page to donate:

<http://mskcc.convio.net/goto/TeamBellCurve>



PERSONAL MILESTONES



Congratulations to Ryan & **Tiffany Trafalgar** who got married on December 29th, 2023 in Brooklyn!



Melissa Assel and her husband welcomed baby Anton on 12/5/2023. Older sister Cecilia is thrilled to have a new playmate!

Congratulations to **Dylan Domenico** and **Sarun Serrewattanawoot** from Computation Oncology who ran the 2023 NYC Marathon.



PROMOTIONS

Marinela Capanu promoted to Attending

Nirjhar Chakraborty promoted to Research Data Analyst

Fiona Ehrich promoted to Research Biostatistician

Jessica Lavery promoted to Senior Research Biostatistician

Jayon Lihm promoted to Principal Computational Biologist

David Nemirovsky promoted to Research Biostatistician

Christy Rajcoomar promoted to Program Assistant

Alli Reiner promoted to Research Biostatistician

Nick Toumbacaris promoted to Research Biostatistician

Srinivasa (Varadan) Sevilimedu- Veeravalli promoted to Senior Principal Biostatistician

Charlie White promoted to Research Biostatistician

STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Chaya Moskowitz has been appointed the inaugural Director of Research for the Lisa and Scott Stuart Center for Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Cancers. In this role, she will help establish and guide a research agenda for the Stuart Center, focusing on the AYA patient and survivor populations.

2023 SERVICE AWARDS

Here are the recipients of the 2023 Service Awards

5 Years

❖ Nicholas Ceglia	❖ Subhiksha Nandakumar
❖ Susan Chimonas	❖ Jovana Olaizola
❖ Diljot Singh Grewal	❖ Sohrab Shah
❖ Jesus Gutierrez Abril	❖ Ignacio Vazquez Garcia
❖ Jayralin Herrera	❖ Henry Walch
❖ Sankeerth Jinna	❖ Gordon Watt
❖ Aaron Mitchell	❖ Karissa Whiting

10 Years

❖ Amy Tin

15 Years

❖ Raymond Baser	❖ Irina Ostrovnyaya
❖ Bradley Cohen	❖ Talya Salz
❖ Joseph Kanik	❖ Nikolaus Schultz

30 Years

❖ Elyn Stubblefield

45 Years

❖ Ann Zauber



PUBLICATIONS

Aaron Mitchell, Akriti Mishra Meza and colleagues, including former faculty and staff **Peter Bach** and **Niti Trivedi**, recently published a paper in BMJ titled "[Pharmaceutical industry payments and delivery of non-recommended and low value cancer drugs: population based cohort study.](#)" Using Medicare data, the authors sought to identify an association between physicians' prescription of pharmaceuticals and payments from relevant companies. The study found that such a relationship exists; cancer patients with oncologists that receive payments from the pharmaceutical industry are more likely to get substandard care.

Melissa Assel, Sigrid Carlsson, Taylor McCready, Amy Tin, Andrew Vickers and other MSK colleagues finalized their publication titled "[Electronic Patient-Reported Symptoms After Ambulatory Cancer Surgery](#)", which has been accepted for publication in JAMA Surgery. The authors described the expected recovery after surgery, using patient-reported symptoms monitoring (Recovery Tracker) from over 12,000 patients undergoing one of the five most common procedures at MSK's Josie Robertson Surgery Center: prostatectomy, nephrectomy, mastectomy, hysterectomy, and thyroidectomy. Overall, the symptom burden was modest in this population, with the highest severity within the first 3 postoperative days. This type of detailed remote symptom monitoring data can inform further implementation, dissemination, and maintenance of our symptom-monitoring program, enhance patient education, and help set expectations.

GRANT SUCCESS

Ben Greenbaum received a Stand up to Cancer award for "Defining immunotherapy potential in genome instability-driven carcinomas".

Ed Reznik received an award from The Society of MSK for his project "Genomic and Metabolic Determinants of Cancer Cachexia".

Niki Schultz received an additional year of funding on his U24 "Human Tumor Atlas Network: Data Coordinating Center".

Sohrab Shah received an AstraZeneca award for "CDK 4/6i resistance & predictors of response in HR+ BC patients in Tempus Data".

Sigrid Carlsson along with Audree Tadros, received a MSK Population Science Research Program Developmental Fund Award for "Is Knowledge Always Power? Understanding the Impact of the 21st Century Cures Act on Oncology Patients and Providers in the Ambulatory Surgery Setting." The 21st Century Cures Act has radically altered the way in which patients can access their health information. The investigators propose to study the consequences, using the Josie Robertson clinic as a base, by reviewing the extent to which patients have accessed their health records since implementation of the Act (Aim 1) and by conducting qualitative research to garner information about the effects of the Act from patients and clinicians (Aims 2 and 3, respectively), with a view to creating interventions to ameliorate any adverse consequences of the Act.

Sigrid Carlsson received an award from the American Cancer Society for "Improving informed choice and guideline-concordant prostate cancer screening: a randomized controlled trial comparing a gist-based versus traditionally designed decision aid".

Sigrid Carlsson received an MSK Surgery Faculty Research Award for "Optimizing Decision Support during Breast Reconstruction Consultations Using Novel Interactive 3D Technology".

Helena Furberg and **Talya Salz** were awarded a TheoryLab grant from the American Cancer Society to determine the patterns of cannabis use among patients with advanced melanoma and kidney cancer who are receiving immunotherapy treatment. Their pilot study will reveal to what extent patients are using cannabis and how feasible it is to enroll them in a future observational study of cannabis harms and benefits at MSK. This study will be conducted in collaboration with Drs. Michael Postow and Martin Voss from the Department of Medicine.

CELEBRATING LI-XUAN

Members of the Biostats group celebrated the promotion of **Li-Xuan Qin** to Attending. They gathered and had a nice authentic Chinese dinner. It also happened to be **Colin's** birthday so there was double the celebration!



NEW STAFF

Adeleye Adeomi, Postdoctoral Research Associate

Adeleye joins the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Department as a postdoctoral research associate, working primarily with Dr. Mengmeng Du. Previously, he was a lecturer and researcher at Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria as a Nutritional Epidemiologist. He is excited to be transitioning into cancer research, especially working on the nexus between nutrition and cancers. He received his Ph.D. from the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. Adeleye is grateful to be a part of the MSK family and to contribute to the institution's mission.



Maria Bromberg, Assistant Research Biostatistician

Maria joins the Epidemiology and Biostatistics department after working for 8 years as a Research Coordinator and Research Project Associate with the MSK Germ Cell Tumor research program and completing her MPH (Biostatistics track) at Mount Sinai. She is currently working with Dr. Sean Devlin and Dr. Yuan Chen on projects investigating outcomes, toxicities, and quality of life endpoints in patients with hematologic malignancies and breast cancer, respectively. She is excited and grateful to join the team and looking forward to expanding her analytical skills and exploring new research topics.



Louis Faure, Research Scholar

Louis has joined the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics as a postdoctoral research scholar with Ruslan Soldatov. His research focuses on the exploration of single cell computational methods to decipher cancer initiation. Previously, he received his PhD at the Medical University of Vienna, Austria, for his work on heterogeneity and cell fate decisions in neural crest cells and spiral ganglion neurons lineages.



Kathryn Graz, Research Technician

Kathryn joins the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics as a Research Technician with Dr. Matt Buas. She graduated with her BS in Bioengineering from the University of California, Los Angeles in spring of 2022. Prior to starting at MSK, she worked as an automation systems consultant for a biopharmaceutical company. Kathryn is excited to take a hands-on approach to research here at MSK and their focus on ending cancer.



Yasin Khadem Charvadeh, Research Scholar

Yasin has newly joined the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics as a Research Scholar. He recently graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a Ph.D. in Statistics. His research areas include personalized medicine, causal inference, analysis of noisy data, recurrent events analysis, and survival analysis. Enthusiastic about advancing personalized medicine, he aims to enhance the effectiveness of cancer care delivery through his work.



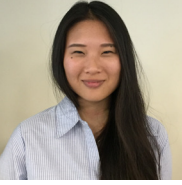
Anirudh Sridharan, Graduate Research Assistant

Anirudh Sridharan, a postdoctoral researcher, has joined the Computational Oncology unit with Ed Reznik. His research focuses on studying metabolism through computational and data-driven ways. He is excited about the implications of metabolism at all scales of biology. Prior to this, he was a graduate student with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), in Bangalore, India, where he focused on developing computational models of astrocyte metabolism in the context of psychiatric disorders.



Michelle Wu, Project Manager

Michelle has joined the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics as a Project Manager supporting the Shah Lab in Computational Oncology. Previous to this, she worked as clinical research staff for MSKCC's GYN service, coordinating prospective surgical and therapeutic trials. As a Research Project Manager she was responsible for the GYN biospecimen research portfolio and worked closely with the GYN Lab director Dr. Britta Weigelt to oversee all aspects of specimen collection initiatives.



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The Newsletter Committee is always looking for new members. If you're interested in working on the newsletter, feel free to contact [Joey Kanik](#)!