

# EPIDEMIOLOGY NEWS

Vol. 4

Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, UNC

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## Reflecting on 20 Years of Departmental Service



Joyce Allen, Departmental Registrar  
Looking back on years 1975 - 1995

When I came to work in Epidemiology, in 1975, there was a banner up on the wall of my office space reading "Epidemiology is the Study of Persons Broken Down by Age and Sex." It was an old joke, even then, and my introduction to the discipline. The 1995 students recently hung a new version of the same banner in 2106 McGavran. Not bad for an exit line.

In 1975 I was trying to be a Seventies person, helping to build my own small Seventies house-in-the-woods, writing about that, and keeping financially afloat with secre-

tarial work. My first Epidemiology job was as secretary for a project headed by Dr. Carolyn Williams. The office where the first banner hung was the second floor of the Credit Union building, where the loan department is now. We called it The Castle. Sue Wolf was there, and Joanna Smith and Veda Manley and Marilyn Knowles, among those who are still around. We did a lot of eating in the Castle. Somewhere I still have my limited first edition copy of The Castle Cookbook. Some time toward the end of the year, the department registrar, Nick Lampros, decided to go to law school. Dr. Ibrahim was just starting in as Chair, and asked if I would like the position. He told me a little about the usual registrar activities, then said I could make whatever I wanted out of the job. That interested me. But I remember the panic too, when I found myself alone in the registrar's office with the 1976 spring semester dawning and a river of students and applicants streaming in. I didn't know anything about graduate programs. Nick had given me a crash course, then left without a forwarding address. For four or five months, whenever someone asked a question I would smile as confidently as I could, say "I'll get back to you on that," and make a note. Then whenever there was a moment I'd grab my notes -- a mountain of them each time -- and try to further my education. There were

two people who saved my reputation. One was Emmy Lou Palladino, who had been School of Public Health registrar forever. Emmy Lou knew everything. The other was Gail King, who was in charge of the Graduate School Enrolled Students office then. Gail knew everything Emmy Lou knew, and also everything else. Those first months my phone was a hot line to the Graduate School. Gail has been kind enough not to repeat all the jokes they must have told about me over there.

Gradually, of course, I began to learn some things. Among them, that Epidemiology really was a pretty unique place. I don't know of many departments on campus with as collegial an atmosphere. I don't know where you can find such an interesting and creative group of faculty, students and staff. Quite a number of the people who were here when I started are still around. Dean Ibrahim, of course. Carl Shy, ensconced in the little brown house -- victim of recent construction -- that was Environmental Epidemiology. Bert Kaplan, fighting Type A and then as now serving as memo-writer-in-chief. Al Tyroler, keeping up major international involvements without missing a beat as researcher and advisor. Barbara Hulka, juggling the chairmanship with an impressive body of cancer research. It was while Barbara Hulka was chair that I



discovered something new about workplace dynamics — the value of the extemporaneous restroom conference. How much information can be exchanged, how many problems can be resolved, when two busy people happen to meet at adjoining washbowls. This advantage, I realized, used to go only to the guys.

Some of the students from those early days are still here in other roles. Vic Schoenbach was here; so were Steve Wing, Dana Loomis, Marilyn Vine. My earliest memories of Gerardo Heiss are of seeing him bent over a secretarial typewriter, working on his dissertation as I left the building. Some of the staff have been here as long as I have, or nearly as long. Besides the former Castle inhabitants, there are Jinny Reid, Phyllis Johnson, Betsy Seagroves, and Lesa McPherson.

I never had the chance to know John Cassel; he was very ill when I started, and died shortly later. I did get to know well, and to miss, Cecil Slome. Cecil was part of the original group who founded the department. He gave me the gift of the early departmental history, and deepened my admiration for it.

In 1975, Epidemiology had something like 56 students. Total. Now there are something like 143. An amazing group, doing amazing things. Good friends. When I recently printed the alumni list from 1975 to the present, 464 names came up. I must know a respectable percentage of U.S. and international epidemiologists; if I had taken some of those Bios courses, I might be able to estimate how large a percentage.

Even with 56 students, though, there was always more to do than

could be done. I never got caught up. I learned early on that catching up isn't among the options. Nick Lampros left me with one piece of advice: "Keep telling them you've got to have an assistant." It took until nine years ago, but then Nancy Colvin became the other member of the student office, and life changed. No, we never got caught up, but Nancy, with her energy and irreverence and considerable skill, made the work possible. As the only other person who really knows what goes on in the student office; she's been a friend and a sounding-board, as well as the most competent assistant one could hope for. Be nice to her...if she sticks around she may be writing her own twenty-year retrospective!

*Joyce Allen*



## Faculty News

### New Faculty

The Department welcomes three new members to the faculty.

Dr. Eugene Lengerich is Director of the Office of Epidemiology and State Chronic Disease Epidemiologist at the Division of Adult Health Promotion, North Carolina Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources. He will be participating in the academic program of the Department of Epidemiology and the Center for Public Health Practice. He will also facilitate linkages between the School of Public Health and the State Health Department.

Dr. Elizabeth Conlisk is serving as a cancer epidemiologist in the department's collaborative program with the Division of Adult Health Promotion of the North Carolina Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources. In this capa-

city, she is working with the State to develop cancer prevention and control programs for adults throughout the North Carolina.

Dr. Maria Hall is a Research Assistant Professor working as an Investigator in the Frank Porter Child Development Center. She is leading an epidemiological surveillance activity for the occurrence of disabilities among children of North Carolina.

### 1995 Promotions

Steve Wing was promoted (effective July 1) and Irva Hertz-Picciotto will be promoted (effective November 1) to the rank of Associate Professor.

*Congratulations!!*

### New 1995 Grants

The following list are of the grants awarded in 1995 to date.

"Assessments of North Carolina children 1995-1996", PI: Kristen Weigle, NCHENR, 5/1/95-4/30/96

"Cancer mortality in minority workers", PI: Dana Loomis, NIOSH, 9/30/95-9/29/97

"Epidemiology of preterm premature rupture of membranes", PI: David Savitz, NIH, 1/1/95-12/31/98

"HyperGEN - Forsyth County Field Center", PI: Gerardo Heiss, NIH, 4/1/95-3/31/2000

"Time related factors in radiation - cancer dose response", PI: Steve Wing, NIOSH, 7/1/95-6/30/97





# Publications

- Aldrich TE, Vann D, Moorman PG, Newman B: Rapid reporting of cancer incidence in a population-based study of breast cancer: one constructive use of a central cancer registry. *Breast Cancer Res Treat* 1995; 35:61-4.
- Aro A, Kardinaal AFM, Salminen I, Kark JD, Riemersma RA, Delgado-Rodriguez J, Gomez-Aracena J, Huttunen JK, Kohlmeier L, et al.: Adipose tissue isomeric trans fatty acids and the risk of myocardial infarction in different countries: the EURAMIC Study. *The Lancet* 1995; 345:273-78.
- Bell NH, Gordon L, Stevens J, et al.: Demonstration that bone mineral density of the lumbar spine, trochanter, and femoral neck is higher in black than in white young men. *Calcif Tissue Int* 1995; 56:11-13.
- Borja-Aburto VH, Loomis DP, Shy C, et al.: Air pollution and daily mortality in Mexico City. *Epidemiol* 1995; 6(suppl.):S64.
- Carozza SE, Olshan AF, Faustman EM, et al.: Maternal exposure to N-nitrosatable drugs as a risk factor for childhood brain tumors. *Int J Epidemiol* 1995; 24:308-312.
- Casper ML, Wing S, Anda RF, et al.: The shifting stroke belt: Changes in the geographic pattern of stroke mortality in the United States, 1962-1988. *Stroke* 1995; 26:755-760.
- Conway K, Edmiston S, Fried DB, Hulka BS, Garrett PA, Liu ET: Ha-ras rare alleles in breast cancer susceptibility. *Breast Cancer Res Treat* 1995; 35:97-104.
- Cooper GS, Baird DD, Hulka BS, Weinberg CR, Savitz DA, et al.: Follicle-stimulating hormone concentrations in relation to active and passive smoking. *Obstet Gynecol* 1995; 85:407-11.
- Hertz-Picciotto I, Neutra R: Predicting responses in humans from animal study results. (Letter) *Epidemiol* 1995; 6:94
- Kardinaal FM, Aro A, Kark JD, Riemersma R A, van't Veer P, Gomez-Aracena J, Kohlmeier L, et al.: Association between beta-carotene and acute myocardial infarction depends on polyunsaturated fatty acid status. *Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol.* 1995; 15.
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- Lee LW, Griffith J, Zenick H, Hulka BS: Human tissue monitoring and specimen banking: Opportunities for exposure assessment risk assessment, and epidemiologic research. *Environ Health Perspect* 1995; 103(Suppl 3):3-8.
- Lipscomb HJ, Loomis DP, Dement JM. Survival techniques for analysis of occupational injury data. *Epidemiol* 1995; 6 (suppl):S113.
- Loomis DP, Browning SR, Savitz DA, et al.: Cancer mortality and exposure to PCBs among electric power workers in the USA. *Epidemiol* 1995; 6(suppl):S112.
- McIntosh GC, Olshan AF, Baird PA: Paternal age and the risk of birth defects in offspring. *Epidemiol* 1995; 6:282-288.
- Millikan R, DeVoto E, Newman B, Savitz D: Studying environmental influences on breast cancer risk: suggestions for an integrated population-based approach. *Breast Cancer Res and Treatment* 1995; 34, 79-89.
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- Rosamond WD, Sprafka JM, McGovern P, et al.: Validation of self-reported history of acute myocardial infarction: experience of the Minnesota Heart Survey Registry. *Epidemiol* 1995; 6(1):67-69.
- Schnitzer PG, Olshan AF, Savitz DA, et al.: Validity of mother's report of father's occupation in a study of paternal occupation and congenital malformations. *Am J Epidemiol* 1995; 141:872-877.
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- Vine MF: Biological markers of exposure: Current status and future research needs. Proceedings of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry - International Conference on the Health Effects of Hazardous Waste, Atlanta, GA, May 3-6, 1993, 1995, pp. 367-377.
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- Zheng Z, Sharrett A, Chambless L, Rosamond W, Nieto J, Sheps D, Heiss G. Ankle-brachial index and cardiovascular disease manifestations: The ARIC Study. *Circulation* 1995; (91) 3:931.

## Staff News

### New Staff

The department welcomes two new members to our research staff. Natalie Young, Research Technician to Dr. Lola Stamm and Deanne Rhodes, Research Technician to Dr.

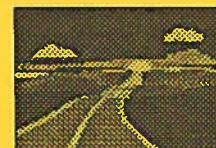
Christine Moe. Natalie is located in room 364 Rosenau and Deanne is located in room 214 Rosenau.

### Staff Departures

Jonathan Frye, Research Technician, left the department in August to attend graduate school at University of Georgia at Athens. Stephanie Miller, Accounting

Technician, also left the department in September taking a position as the Convention Sales Manager for the Durham Hilton.

Good Luck to you both!!





# Student News

## Awards Received

The 1995 John Cassel Award for Distinguished Graduate Assistant was presented on May 5 to Antonio Cunha. Lisa Pastore received the Travel and Book Award from Delta Omega (Theta Chapter), School of Public Health.

Lisa Pastore received the Travel Award and the Book Award.

Congratulations to both of you!!



## Dissertation Defenses

Fredrickson, Doren, "Breast-feeding among WIC-participating women in north Carolina: An integrated qualitative-quantitative study & a randomized control trial"

Nardo, Christopher, "An investigation of the response of blood pressure to change in body position"

Lee, Jong-Tae, "Respiratory health & PM10: A community-based study"

Maier, William, "Asthma and other respiratory symptoms in Seattle school children: prevalence, associated outcomes and indoor risk factors"

Chang, Shine, "Survival from breast cancer and the timing of tumor removal during the menstrual cycle"

## Grant Received

Diane Marie St. George has received grant funding for a project entitled "Epidemiology of Cancer Risk among Caribbean Americans" beginning 8/1/95 through 5/31/98.

*JOB WELL DONE!!*

## ESO News

The Epidemiology Study Organization (ESO) facilitates academic exchanges, sponsors and coordinates social activities, and provides resources for epidemiology students. ESO-sponsored activities for this semester include the orientation picnic, brown bag lunches with faculty, and informal social gatherings on Friday afternoons. ESO also provides representation to various academic affairs committees within the department and the university.

ESO activities have recently added SPORTS! Intramural (IM) teams are currently being formed for bowling and badminton, with soccer and volleyball are coming in the spring. Students who want to sign up should contact Gail Shimokura or Julie Daniels. An IM 3-person

women's basketball team has already competed (and was soundly defeated), but non-competitive practices continue. We play Sundays at 10 a.m. at the community center, but the time may change to accommodate church goers. Faculty, post-docs, and staff) are also invited!

ESO is planning a group hike on Saturday, October 14.

ESO encourages all students to join us for Friday after-noon happy hour. The outings have been a huge success, a great way for new and old students to meet. We've frequented drinking establishments on Franklin Street and we are open to others. Anyone wanna play pool?

Watch for our student survey to assess interests and concerns. Remember, we need a high response rate for generalizable results!

ESO dues are only \$12. Dues help pay for certain activities, as well as for the "under-construction" student room computer lab and the New York Times Subscription. Simply write a check payable to ESO and put it in the handy ESO mailbox. Thanks for you support!

If you have any questions about ESO, please come to our next meeting or contact one of the ESO officers: Pam Marcus, Michelle Mendez, Jeff Korte, or Anneclaire De Roos.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### University Holidays

1995 - November 23 & 24 December 25 - 27

1996 - January 1 & January 15

### Departmental Holiday Party

Keep an eye on your e-mail for the announcement of our Annual Departmental Holiday Party.

### Departmental Faculty Retreat

This year's departmental faculty retreat is scheduled for December 11 beginning at 12:00 noon and continuing all day on December 12. The retreat will be held at the Friday Center.





# Fall 1995

## Epidemiology News Supplement

# "UNCLE" Medline Update



The "UNCLE" MEDLINE, available at your personal computers "has been changed...the new upgrade:

- 1) is more user friendly once you get used to it
- 2) includes all article citations back to 1966 (formerly went back to 1985)
- 3) includes some automatic conversion from free words to the controlled vocabulary that increases search effectiveness
- 4) includes link to full text of the *New England Journal of Medicine* from January 1992.

Ah, how wonderful, but what do I need to LEARN NOW to succeed on first try?

1) In Epidemiology, if you're connected to a Laser Jet Printer, you need to change a default now (or you will waste one page for every page of print). Here's how:

- a. on vax at \$ prompt, enter *uncle*, press return.
- b. at login: enter *your uncle login*, press enter.
- c. at password: enter *your uncle password*, press enter.
- d. at Health Sciences Literature (OVID), press enter. Wait for OVID to open.
- e. press two more enters to get to blank search screen.
- f. enter Control O (^O) for options.
- g. arrow down to Default Settings, press enter.
- h. press enter at System...
- i. arrow down to General Print Options, press enter.
- j. arrow down to Number of Lines/Page, press enter.
- k. change from 66 to 60 lines per page, press enter.
- l. enter Control L (^L) to close the editor.
- m. press enter to save permanently.

2) Here's a computer-walk-through to experience the new features:

To see automatic conversion to controlled vocabulary:

- a. at blank search screen; enter *coronary heart disease*, press enter.
- b. on next screen at Broader and Narrower Subjects, at Coronary Disease, press enter.
- c. on next screen at All Documents, press enter.
- d. on next screen at Include All Subheadings, press enter.
- e. back at search screen, enter *diet*, press enter.
- f. on next screen, down arrow to Diet, press enter.
- g. on next screen, down arrow to Vegetarianism, press enter.
- h. on next screen, press enter.
- i. on next screen at All Documents, press enter.
- j. on next screen at Include All Subheadings, press enter.
- k. back at search screen, enter *1 and 2* to combine terms, press enter.
- l. press Control K (^K) to view set, press return.
- m. press Control T (^T) to view with only title, author and source.
- n. press Control D (^D) to return to view with title, controlled vocabulary MeSH terms and abstract
- o. arrow down to see Abstract.
- p. press Control L (^L) to return to search screen.

To see full text from articles in NEJM from within MEDLINE:

- p. enter Control J (^J) for journal, press enter. Enter *New England*, press enter twice
- q. next, enter *3 and 4*, and press enter, to limit the articles to those in NEJM.



- r. enter Control K (^K) to view article, press enter twice.
  - s. note the entry at the top of the citation [use LINK to view the full text].
  - t. Enter Control K (^K) to link to full text; you'll see title page.
  - u. Use down arrow to read article, or Control P (^P) to print article.
  - v. To exit from this search statement, press Control L (^L) [stands for close]. To go back to search screen anytime, use Control L (^L).
- 3) If your topic doesn't work in the controlled vocabulary, search it as a *textword*, that is, search for it in the titles and/or abstracts of citations by using

Control T (^T) from the controlled vocabulary screen or Control R (^R) from the main search screen.

- 4) There is a database choice with only NEJM articles:
- a. After the "Wait for OVID to open," press enter ONCE.
  - b. Arrow down to NEJM, press enter. Using this route, the only search method is *textword*.

Questions? [ddegan@sophia.sph.unc.edu](mailto:ddegan@sophia.sph.unc.edu) OR send an e-mail to [UNCLEhelp@med.unc.edu](mailto:UNCLEhelp@med.unc.edu)

#### EPIDEMIOLOGY NEWS

Publications Committee

Lesla McPherson, Editor      Andy Olshan  
Darrah Degnan                      Anneclaire De Roos

Department of Epidemiology  
School of Public Health  
McGavran-Greenberg Bldg.  
CB #7400  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7400