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Calendar of Events

The Annual Meeting of ACE
September 8th-11th, 2012
Chicago, IL 60611

[Click here](#) for important Annual Meeting dates and deadlines.

Fellows Corner

Newly Appointed
Fellows - Summer 2012
**

Adrienne Ettinger
Emond Kabagambe
Jayarman Shanmugam
Jorge Ibarra
Mary Schubauer-Berigan
May Lutfiyya

Complete Newsletter

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President's Letter

Robert McKeown



For this final newsletter message as president, I want to talk about the important link between two seemingly unrelated events: the upcoming ACE Annual Meeting in Chicago (September 8-11) and the recent release of a policy statement on asbestos by the Joint Policy Committee of Societies of Epidemiology (<http://www.jpc-se.org/>). Both events deal with the translation of epidemiologic findings to practice or policy, and both raise important questions of epistemology and ethics.

The JPC-SE statement was the subject of the entire issue of the most recent Epi Monitor, an indication of the importance of this joint statement that has been endorsed by an unusually large number of organizations. The ACE Board of Directors majority vote to endorse the JPC-SE asbestos statement was not unanimous. There was considerable discussion over the course of several months, and a number of recommendations from the Board, from our Policy Committee (chaired by Ross Brownson), and from Bob Hiatt, our representative to JPC, were subsequently adopted by the JPC and, we believe, resulted in a more focused, stronger statement. There were members of the Board who disagreed. Reasons for both support and opposition varied among Board members, much as members of a court may have different reasons for support or dissent from a given ruling.

The theme of the Annual Meeting this year is "Accelerating the Use of Epidemiologic Findings for Population Benefits", and it promises to be an incredibly informative, exciting meeting. The connection to the JPC statement is that translation of epidemiologic findings to practice and policy also involves judgments about the weight of the evidence, feasibility of implementation, methods for application, and best approaches to maximize benefits.

These two events remind us that our judgments are fallible: our confidence intervals and p-values are obvious reminders of the uncertainty of our findings, but they don't tell us anything about the range of biases in design and execution that could impact results. Those sources of error are compounded by the values that shape our judgments, whether scientific, ethical, or personal. Sometimes these values are explicit and conscious; sometimes implicit, tacit, and perhaps unconscious.

My point is that the Annual Meeting, quite apart from the importance of the scheduled program, gives us another opportunity to reflect on how we as practicing epidemiologists and the College take seriously both the uncertainty of our findings and the obligation to make our work applicable to improving population health. I hope to see many of you there.

Finally, a word of appreciation to Denise Oleske and the Program Committee, Kris Fennie and the Education Committee, Peter Kralka, our Executive Director, and his staff, members of the ACE Executive Committee, and all of you who have worked with such dedication and patience to make this Annual Meeting so remarkable and the past year such a delight.

Robert, rmckeown@mailbox.sc.edu

Top Stories

What's New@the ACE Annual Meeting?



Denise Oleske: Program Chairperson

On Monday, September 10 from 3:15 to 4:45 pm, the Annual Meeting attendees will be able to hear where and how epidemiology is being translated to benefit populations across the

globe in Spotlight Sessions. These Sessions will feature ACE thought-leaders from the areas of environmental, social, and health services epidemiology. One of the Spotlight Sessions will focus on submitted abstracts that are recognized by the Publications Committee for their outstanding impact on communicating epidemiological research.

Pre-and (new) post-meeting Workshops offer both early careerists and experienced epidemiologists opportunities for advancing their knowledge in a variety of highly specialized topics relevant to research, education, and practice.

Check the ACE website for the latest Program Agenda. Don't miss the chance for a discount if your registration is submitted by August 17, 2012!

Workshops at the Annual Meeting

Kristopher Fennie: Education Committee Chairperson



The Education Committee, together with the Program, Ethics, and Minority Affairs Committees, has put together stimulating workshops for the Annual Meeting. In addition to the pre-conference workshops on Saturday and Sunday (September 8-9), this year we are adding two post-conference workshops to be held on Tuesday, September 11th. On Saturday,

the Minority Affairs Committee is going to discuss translating epidemiologic findings into policy in the context of health disparities. On Sunday, the Ethics Committee is conducting an exciting workshop on contemporary ethical challenges in epidemiology. Also on Sunday an array of workshops will be given on methods (Bayesian analysis; mediation and moderation analysis; working with electronic health datasets; and working with national datasets such as NHANES), as well as a workshop on innovation and creativity in epidemiologic studies. The post-conference workshops, on Tuesday afternoon, include the following: Preparation of NIH grants, and Communicating epidemiologic findings to the public. A description of the workshops can be found at this link. To register for workshops please visit the registration site. We anticipate full workshops, so register early to ensure a place.

As part of the regular conference the Education Committee is offering a number of interesting roundtables on topics including the History of Epidemiology, Open Access Journals, Career Mentoring (Academia, Government, and Industry), Impact of the Affordable Care Act and Epidemiology, Challenges in Addressing Hepatitis C, and School based Immunizations.

We believe we have an interesting array of quality workshops and roundtables, and hope that attendees at the meeting will be able to take part in them.

Creativity in Epidemiology Research, Education and practice

Sandy Sulsky

Over the course of some half dozen meetings, a task force of ACE Members and Fellows (Melinda Aldrich, Robert Hiatt, Nancy Kreiger, Richard Rothenberg, and I, as chair) attempted to identify existing barriers to innovation and creativity in epidemiology practice and training. The group had lively discussions and traded lay and scientific reading materials and web links in an attempt to understand the conditions that promote innovation in science.

The result is a series of recommendations for ACE that were recently submitted to the Board of Directors.

The task force members found that considering the scientific and societal megatrends now affecting epidemiology helped them to formulate their specific recommendations. Just two of these megatrends, "Big Data" and "Team Science", provided helpful themes and sparked ideas about new directions for ourselves and our discipline.

Considering the theme of Big Data allowed for fruitful discussions of innovation in information management and analysis methods. Big Data refers not only to the sizes of data sets, but also the novel types of information now available. Examples potentially relevant to epidemiology include data derived from a) basic biology and genetics, including the "-omics"; b) changing methods of practicing, delivering and documenting medical care, including the use of electronic medical records and their linkages to health systems; and c) wholly novel data sources and information technology, including social media.

Team Science recognizes the value of interacting with colleagues whose training was in different scientific disciplines. Articulating this theme led to an examination of the ways in which epidemiology is currently practiced (by groups of epidemiologists) and the limitations imposed by traditionally organized work places and schools with separate departments and specialties, often housed in different locations.

The task force identified actions available to ACE that will expand and support innovative thinking and research among its members. The recommendations note the importance of education, collaborative research, and policy changes that will both foster and reward risk-taking in research, and thus maintain epidemiology at the forefront of science.

For an initial and non-comprehensive list of resources, we suggest:

- * Ignorance: How it Drives Science, by Stuart Firestein (2012, Oxford University Press)
- * Two articles appeared in the NY Times on February 26, 2012: Gray Matter: When Truisms Are True by: Suntae Kim, Evan Polman and Jeffrey Sanchez-Burks and True Innovation by Jon Gertner.
- * Changing Educational Paradigms, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U>
- * ACE Past President Roberta Ness has presented on innovative thinking in epidemiology, <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDxHouston-2011-Roberta-B-Ness>

Webidemiology: An Emerging Tool in Disease Surveillance



Sreenivas P Veeranki

Email: dveeranki@gmail.com

Every epidemiologist might be familiar with the words - *chronic diseases epidemiology, infectious diseases epidemiology, field epidemiology, environmental epidemiology, applied epidemiology, social epidemiology and clinical trials epidemiology*. How about *webidemiology* or *infodemiology*? Webidemiology is defined as the method of using internet

search/activity as an indicator of epidemic outbreaks.

Some public health professionals call it as "infodemiology" - using internet "information" to track an epidemic. It is the latest buzz word that has been gaining importance because it links our increasingly daily digital lives with the public health. Daily internet use can now be used to monitor health patterns and trends, and disease outbreaks. Internet use is not only a source of health-related information but also an indicator for real-time surveillance of emerging public health threats. Public health professionals are now taping health-related internet activity or searches or queries and social media activities or blogs for real-time surveillance. People in a specific region searching for specific health-related information can be tracked through their internet searches or activity, and the location of the disease outbreak can be identified using their IP addresses thereby contributing to real-time surveillance of public health threat.

Some of the examples of webidemiology include Google Flu Trends that uses internet search queries and HealthMap that uses social media and news sites. Studies have shown that there is a moderate-to-high correlation between health-related internet activity data and the emergency department visits [1]. In addition, it is found that these sophisticated web-based tools can detect outbreaks 7-10 days earlier to the conventional CDC surveillance [2]. Hence, they can be helpful in real-time surveillance to alert public health workers to act in the early stages of an outbreak thereby reducing morbidity and mortality. Of course, possible selection bias and other weaknesses need to be acknowledged. Webidemiology can be helpful in developing countries where the diseases spread very fast, however, use of web-based tools are not adequate. The increasing concern for international issues such as bioterrorism, emergence of new strains of viruses, infectious diseases and pandemics highlight the importance of webidemiology in real-time disease surveillance.

1. Dugas AF, Hsieh YH, Levin SR, Pines JM, Mareiniss DP, Mohareb A, et al. Google Flu Trends: Correlation With Emergency Department Influenza Rates and Crowding Metrics. *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 2012 Feb 15;54(4):463-9.

2. Ginsberg J, Mohebbi MH, Patel RS, Brammer L, Smolinski MS, Brilliant L. Detecting influenza epidemics using search engine query data. Nature 2009;457:1012-4.

From the Board of Directors

Notification of Proposed Bylaws Revisions, Standing Committees

In September 2011, the ACE Board of Directors approved the creation of the Associate Member Committee to provide organizational structure to the activities and programmatic events surrounding the affairs of the associate membership. This addition requires an amendment to the ACE bylaws, which will be voted on during business meeting at the ACE Annual Meeting in September 2012. The original 60-day notification was already circulated electronically.

Click [here](#) to view the proposed changes and original ACE Bylaws.

2012 - 2013 ACE Election Results

Ross Brownson	President-Elect
Jonine Bernstein	Member of the Board
Kristopher Fennie	Member of the Board
Victor J. Schoenbach	Member of the Board
G. Marie Swanson	Member of the Board

Congratulations to Newly Elected Officers! The College will remain in good hands!

Associate Directors' Report



Joe Holbrook and Bertha Hidalgo: Outgoing and Incoming Associate Directors

We hope that you are enjoying your summer and starting to plan for your attendance at the ACE Annual Meeting! The conference will feature a variety of Associate Member friendly activities and workshops.

The Annual Meeting will include a job fair, a grant writing workshop, and a workshop highlighting opportunities for obtaining dissertation data.

Among some of the more exciting achievements this quarter, we are pleased to announce that we are piloting a travel grant program for 10 Associate Members whose abstracts were scored highest by the Publications Committee! The Ethics and Minority Affairs committees were also able to secure funds to help offset travel and attendance costs for Associate Members this year. We continue to be thankful for the overwhelming support from ACE leadership and the growing

partnerships with ACE committees, allowing us to develop as an active group within the College.

Committee liaisons have continued their involvement across the organization, and have been invaluable to the Associate Membership on committee efforts. Two of our Associate Members were recently published in the Annals of Epidemiology; an opportunity resulting from participation in the ACE Policy Committee!

Finally, we encourage you to join our monthly calls and increase your participation within our committee and the College! Please do contact Joe and Bertha with any questions, ideas, or input for Associate Members (aceassocmember@gmail.com), and remember to "Like" our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/joinACE, for updates and announcements. Our next bi-monthly Associate Member general meeting will be on October 1 (8:30 pm-9:30 EST). Wishing you a happy and productive summer!

ACE Treasurer's Report

Diana Bensyl: ACE Treasurer



Early this year, Jim Collins stepped down as ACE Treasurer after many successful years in that role. He helped ensure the College maintained a sound financial position while also exploring new ways to help maintain financial success. One of the projects that remains ongoing is obtaining 501(c)(3) status for ACE. This status is highly regulated by the Internal Revenue Service and it will allow the college to accept tax deductible donations. We thank Jim for his long and continued service to the College!

With Jim's departure from the Executive Board, I have taken on the role as the new ACE Treasurer. I hope that I can learn the intricacies of the position and follow his successful example. I have served on the Education Committee and Program Committees as member and Chair. I also have served on subcommittees for the board and look forward to this new role as Treasurer.

ACE is financially stable, but given the difficult economy over the last few years and a reduction in earnings on some of our investments, we continue to explore new ways to increase the cash flow of the College. The Finance Committee is considering obtaining sponsorship of aspects of our Annual Meeting. Many epidemiologic and public health societies include sponsorships to help offset the high costs of meetings. With sponsorships, we can keep registration costs low while still holding meetings in venues that are the most comfortable and accessible to our members. It also ensures that we can offer scholarships and decreased costs to Associate Members. I look forward to working with the Finance Committee to continue developing these and other considerations for the College.

Commentary



I am looking to "retire" as the ACE newsletter editor. If you are an ACE member and have served on a committee (past or present) and would like to contribute to the College, please contact me.

Carol Burns, Newsletter Editor

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