

SER Newsletter

SER Spring 2008

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SER's 41st ANNUAL MEETING



Downtown Chicago, IL
Meeting Dates: June 24—27, 2008

The 41st Annual SER Meeting will be held June 24 (eve) - 27, 2008. The meeting and accommodations will be held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago on the Riverwalk. Located one block off The Magnificent Mile—near Millennium Park, Lake Michigan and the Chicago River. Walking distance to many of Chicago's finest restaurants, attractions, theaters, shopping and nightspots.

To make hotel reservations visit the SER website <http://www.epiresearch.org/>

For additional information about the Hyatt Regency Chicago on the Riverwalk visit:

<http://chicagoregency.hyatt.com>

Airports: Seventeen miles to O'Hare/Fifteen miles to Midway. Connected to the 83-acre indoor Illinois Center complex featuring: Numerous stores and services, including restaurants, salons, postal services and much more!

SAVE THE DATES!

SER's future meetings:

- 2009 - Anaheim, CA (June 23-26)
- 2010 - Seattle, WA (June 23-26)
- 2011 - Montreal, QC (June 21-24)
CONGRESS YEAR



JOB PLACEMENT NOTEBOOK

If you have a position you are trying to fill or if you are interested in a new position, the SER meeting is the place to make a match. We are assembling a notebook of available positions, and people in search of new positions.

At SER, you can read the job ads or resumes, and speak to the people themselves. Mail your resumes or positions by June 13th, 2008 to Terry Sniff, SER, 375 Chipeta Way, Suite A, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108, or e-mail to terry.sniff@utah.edu

ALUMNI REUNIONS

A number of universities have organized successful receptions for faculty, alumni, and students at past SER meetings. If you would like to have a reunion at the conference hotel, you may contact :

Catering Manager Chrissy Carpenter,
Phone# 312-239-4723,
ccarpenter@hyatt.com

PRESIDENT'S CORNER by Sherman James, Ph.D.

Our 2008 annual meeting, to be held in Chicago from June 24-27, promises to be one of the most exciting and best attended in recent years. By the February 1st deadline, we had received 587 abstract submissions (227, or 39%, from students), many of which addressed substantive and methodological questions at the very cutting edge of our field. An additional 57 "late breaker" abstracts were submitted after the February 1st deadline, bringing the total number to 644 - one of the highest in recent memory. In addition to Roundtables and "Meet the Experts" sessions sponsored by our fast growing SER-Student Caucus, the 2008 meeting will feature 15 symposia and 24 spotlight sessions that cover a variety of topics. Included among the topics is epidemiology's relationship to the national media and to organized interest groups. See the program information link on the SER homepage for more details.



SER President
Dr. Sherman James

The theme for the 2008 meeting is *Social Determinants of Health*, and the keynote addresses, symposia, and spotlight sessions treating this theme explicitly will emphasize the interplay between social and biological determinants of population health and health disparities. The emphasis on the social determinants of health, while always important, is especially timely this year given the high likelihood that the increasing economic hardship (job losses, inability to pay for medical care, home foreclosures, rising costs of food and energy, etc) on those most vulnerable to these developments will further exacerbate the large social inequalities in health and life expectancy that already exist. Provided our theories and methods are up to the task, epidemiologists are better positioned than any other group of scientists to illuminate for the general public, and for policy makers, exactly how these adverse social and material conditions of life undermine human health - now and for future generations. Our keynote speakers, Dr. Diana Kuh - a major scholar in the field of life-course epidemiology, and Dr. David R. Williams - renown for his path-breaking work on US racial health inequalities, will set the stage for what I am confident will be a stimulating and enjoyable three day meeting.

SER is the vibrant organization that it is because of an outstanding permanent staff, based in Salt Lake City, and a talented, dedicated eight-person Executive Committee (EC) composed of epidemiologists each of whom serves a three year term. Three EC members will conclude their term of service at the coming June meeting: Michael Bracken (immediate past president), Mary Haan (member-at-large), and Noel Weiss (member-at-large). On behalf of the entire SER membership, I thank them for their numerous and valuable contributions to SER over the past three years. I, myself, have greatly enjoyed serving as your president this year, and I look forward to seeing you in a few months. Chicago is a wonderful city, especially in June. This year's meeting is one you will not want to miss!

Sherman James
SER President
Duke University

2008 THEME SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The John C. Cassel Memorial Lecture will be presented by Dr. David R. Williams, the Norman Professor of Public Health at Harvard University. Renown for his path-breaking work on US racial health inequalities.

The 2008 Keynote Address will be presented by Keynote speaker Dr. Diana Kuh, Director of the MRC Unit for Lifelong Health and Ageing and of the MRC National Survey of Health and Development. Dr. Kuh has a first degree in Economics from Cambridge University and a PhD from the London School of Economics on early life influences on adult health.

Abraham Lilienfeld Student Prize Winner Address: Winner Katherine M. Keyes, MPH, from Department of Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, and New York State Psychiatric Institute.



SER'S ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA (TENTATIVE)

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

8:00 am - 12:30 pm	SER—SC Workshop Developing an Epidemiologic Research Project
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	SER PhD Student Workshop
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	ACE Workshops
1:00 am - 5:30 pm	SER-SC Workshop Advanced Topics in SAS Programming
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Registration
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Welcome Reception
7:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Poster Session 1

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

7:00 am - 8:00 am	SER-Student Caucus Roundtables (by ticket only)
7:30 am - 5:30 pm	Registration
7:30 am - 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast and Posters
8:30 am - 10:00 am	Plenary Session
	- President's Address: Sherman James, Duke University
	- Keynote Address: Diana Kuh, University College - London
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Break
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Judging - Poster Session 1
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Spotlight Session 1
12:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Lunch (on your own)
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	Roundtable 1 (by ticket only)
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Symposia 1
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Break
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Spotlight Session 2
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Poster Session 2
6:30 pm	SER Social Event

Thursday, June 26, 2008

7:30 am - 8:30 am	SER-Student Caucus Roundtables (by ticket only)
7:30 am - 5:30 pm	Registration
7:30 am - 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30 am - 10:00 am	Plenary Session
	- John C Cassel Memorial Lecture : David R Williams, Harvard University
	- Lilienfeld Student Prize Winner address: Katherine M. Keyes, MPH, Dept. of Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health , Columbia University and New York State Psychiatric Institute
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Break
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Judging - Poster Session 2
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Spotlight Session 3
12:00 am - 1:30 pm	Lunch (on your own)
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	Roundtable 2 (by ticket only - lunch NOT included)
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Symposia 2
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Break
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Spotlight Session 4
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Poster Session 3
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	SER Membership Business Meeting
7:00 pm onward	Alumni Reunions

Friday, June 27, 2008

7:30 am - 8:30 am	SER - Student Caucus Member's Business Meeting
7:30 am - 12:00 pm	Registration
7:30 am - 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30 am - 10:00 am	Symposia 3
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Break
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Judging - Poster Session 3
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Spotlight Session 5
12:00 noon	Meeting Adjourned

SYMPOSIA SESSIONS

Symposia 1

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

1:30 pm—3:00 pm

- Unequal Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Breast Cancer Subtypes: Identifying Mechanisms by Which Adverse Social Environments May Modulate Genetic Vulnerabilities, *Robert Hiatt*
- Epidemiology Responds to its Media Critics, *Noel Weiss*
- Social Epidemiology and Behavioral Health: Methodologic Approaches, Problems, and Promise, *Sandro Galea*
- Social and Environmental Determinants of Diabetes: What We can Learn from National to Community Level Data, *Sharon Saydah*
- Making Lemonade from Lemons: Implications of Marginal Structural Model Analysis for Public Health Planning and Policy, *Sheryl Magzamen*
- Limitations of Neighborhoods Research for Understanding Racial Health Disparities, *Theresa Osypuk*

Symposia 2

Thursday, June 26, 2008

1:30 pm—3:00 pm

- Risks and Benefits of the use of the STROBE Checklist by Scientific Journals, *Noel Weiss*
- Methodological Issues in the Analysis of new Biomarkers, *Enrique Schisterman*
- Intent-to-Treat Analyses of 2-Armed Randomized Controlled tTrials: Can We Improve on the Gold Standard?, *M Maria Glymour*
- Threats to Epidemiologic Science from Organized Interests, *Carl V Phillips*
- Integration of Biological Pathways in Epidemiologic Research of the Social Gradient in Health, *Carlos Mendes de Leon*

Symposia 3

Friday, June 27, 2008

8:30 am—10:00 am

- "Whose Data are They?" – Opportunities and pitfalls of publicly accessible data, *Allen Wilcox*
- Climate Change and Human Health: Risks and Responses, *Kristie L Ebi*
- Choosing Appropriate Counterfactuals for Research on the Health Effects of Socioeconomic Position and Neighborhoods, *David Rehkopf and Irene Yen*
- The "Hispanic Paradox": What's Real and What's Not, *David A Shoham*

SER ELECTIONS



Ballots for 2008 elections are available online at SER website: <http://www.epiresearch.org>.

Vote online now for your chance to win one of three free 2009 SER memberships!

President-Elect nominees:

- Stephen Walter, Ph.D., Professor, Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
- Arthur L. Reingold, MD, Professor and Division Head University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health.

Members-At-Large nominees: **Vote for two**

- Jay S. Kaufman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Ann M. Geiger, MPH, PhD, Associate Professor and Head, Section on Healthcare Systems and Policy, Departments of Social Science and Policy and Epidemiology and Prevention, Div. of Public Health Sciences, Wake Forest Univ. School of Medicine
- Irene H. Yen, Ph.D., M.P.H. Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)
- Stephen K. Van Den Eeden, PhD, Senior Epidemiologist, Division of Research, Kaiser Permanente - Oakland, Lecturer, Epidemiology, Health Research and Policy, Stanford University



SER CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Candidate for SER President

Stephen Walter, Ph.D.,

Professor,

Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics,

McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

I have been a member of SER throughout my career, and the Society remains one of my favorite professional organizations. The SER Annual Meeting always produces some memorable sessions on methodology issues or topical research questions. Strong links to the *American Journal of Epidemiology* also provide stimulation to SER members during the rest of the calendar year. Personally, I have previously served as Member-at-Large on the SER Executive, and was the Local Organizer for the Annual Meeting in New Haven, Connecticut. I was also an Editor of the *American Journal of Epidemiology* for over 10 years.

I have worked in epidemiology in several settings, ranging from a Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine (University of Ottawa), a School of Public Health (Yale), and a Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics (McMaster University). I have done collaborative research on the design and analysis of studies in a number of areas, including cancer etiology, the evaluation of diagnostic and screening tests, clinical decision making, and health care delivery models (including US/Canada comparisons). I have been an investigator on a number of randomized clinical trials, in surgery, intensive care, and on therapeutic interventions for children with developmental disabilities. I have always had a strong interest in the methodology issues arising in this work, and I often try to develop general biostatistical and other methodology techniques that are based on these practical experiences. Finally, I have also been involved in international programs to develop the discipline of epidemiology overseas, in various countries in Asia, South America and Africa.

I have observed that the problems that confront epidemiologists vary enormously by space and time, but there is nevertheless a unifying theme from the population approach that we bring to those problems. The epidemiologic method is one that has gained considerable prominence in the media and in the mind of the public over recent years. For example, I believe that there is increased recognition that epidemiology can help in unraveling the complex relationships between lifestyle risk factors and health, and in meeting the challenges of rational delivery of health care. At the same time, people are often confused about why epidemiology studies often seem to yield inconsistent results, and there is little understanding of the significant practical difficulties that we face in producing trustworthy and credible evidence.

The SER provides an ideal forum in which the evolving environment of epidemiologic research can be discussed, for example with respect to declining response rates to population-based health surveys, and establishing the strength and weaknesses of new methods, such as when studies are carried out through the internet. The SER provides a strong professional base from which to explore new methods and research findings. I believe that the SER should continue its traditional role in fostering and evaluating new methodological and applied research. It should also continue to facilitate the entry of new professionals into epidemiology. Finally, it is important that epidemiologists improve how they communicate their findings to decision-makers and to the general public.

If elected, it would be my privilege to serve as your President and encourage and maintain these important aspects of the organization.

Stephen Walter

Candidate for SER President:

Arthur L. Reingold, MD
Professor and Division Head
University of California, Berkeley
School of Public Health



As is true for a number of other epidemiologists I know, my entry into the field of epidemiology as the result of inadvertence rather than the inevitable outcome of a thoughtful career plan. Having gone to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officer, with no training in epidemiology outside a brief required course in medical school (that was long on biostatistics and short on epidemiology) and a clear cut plan to return to academic medicine, I discovered that I loved epidemiology and public health. Epidemiologic studies provided intellectual challenges that suited my puzzle-doing, detective story-loving side, and public health provided an opportunity to prevent illnesses and deaths that accorded with my desire to contribute to the health of the community in some fashion. To me, epidemiologic research and public health were interesting and exciting in ways that neither clinical medicine nor laboratory research had ever been.

Although my EIS experience and the additional six years I spent working for CDC changed my life, I ultimately decided to leave CDC for a faculty position at the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) where I have been since 1985. While academia is a step removed from the “real world” of public health, it provides me an ongoing opportunity to conduct epidemiologic research and a unique opportunity to conduct epidemiologic research and a unique opportunity to proselytize, spreading the word about epidemiology to undergraduates, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and even occasional faculty members from disparate fields outside of public health. In all my courses, both at Berkeley and in various countries around the world, I put a premium on bringing “real world” experience, challenges, and questions into the classroom, hoping to infect students with the same excitement and enthusiasm about epidemiology that I have retained for the last 25 years.

In my view, a key challenge for the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) is to find new and creative ways of generating and sustaining excitement and enthusiasm about epidemiology and about SER itself, among its members and at its annual meeting. Yes, there are constantly evolving methods to discuss and challenges such as declining response rates and HIPAA to confront, and SER needs to remain at the forefront of such discussions, serving as a forum for debate and for enhancing the professional development of our members. SER must also be well-represented in the rapidly developing efforts to establish core competencies in epidemiology (and in public health more broadly) at the masters and doctoral levels and to provide certification of such competencies to employers such as public health agencies. However, in my experience, getting senior members to make attendance at the annual meeting a high priority remains an ongoing challenge; most members of SER have little contact with or investment in the Society except for the annual meeting; and many epidemiologists are not currently members. If we want SER to grow, prosper, and remain vibrant, I believe we must find creative ways for the Society and the annual meeting to evolve. What can we do? To be candid, I have only recently been stimulated to think about this challenge and can't claim to have the answer(s). However, if elected President, I would commit my time and energy to working with the membership, executive committee, and staff to energize and expand SER.

Candidate for Executive Committee Member at Large

Jay S. Kaufman, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

I am proud to hail from the frigid, rusty and proletarian milieu of Buffalo, New York, where the local issue of “Love Canal” provided me a nascent introduction to issues of epidemiology and public health. After undergraduate degrees in neuroscience from Johns Hopkins University and Music Performance from Peabody Institute of Music, I returned to the wintry bosom of the mid-west for doctoral training in epidemiology at the University of Michigan. I am a firm believer that epidemiology is nestled in a triangle whose vertices are biologic sciences, social sciences and quantitative sciences, and at Michigan I found ample exposure to all three thanks to the guidance and example of my mentor, Sherman James. I conducted my doctoral dissertation work in southwest Nigeria, and continued with international cardiovascular research as a post-doc at Loyola Medical center in Chicago. I then spent two years as a hospital epidemiologist in Charlotte, North Carolina before settling at my current faculty position in Chapel Hill.

Epidemiology is a diverse field, and so I have tried to nurture varied interests within the discipline. Though trained in social and cardiovascular epidemiology, I have sought to contribute to other areas, including the study of reproductive outcomes, the social epidemiology of infectious diseases, various epidemiologic methods, and the application of epidemiologic techniques to clinical and health services contexts. The overarching focus of my work has been on health disparities, however, which I see as a primary mission of public health, and therefore a richly deserving target of epidemiologic inquiry. I owe these priorities in part to my fortuitous encounters with great mentors on one hand, and inspiring students on the other. It is an especially rich experience to have worked for a decade in Chapel Hill, where a large and diverse coterie of students and faculty have provided the kind of relentless prodding that keeps one abreast of the rapidly developing field and yet focused on the things that really matter.

In addition to a dedication to the public health values that define our profession, I am also committed to professional service, and in this capacity function as editor or associate editor for several of our journals. It is also in keeping with this devotion to our professional instruments and structures that I have acquiesced to stand for election as executive committee member-at-large for SER. While I have no illusion that this is a position of particular influence or prestige, I nonetheless stand for election with a sincere dedication to the organization and I anticipate a real joy in grappling with the administrative minutia that keep our society and professional meetings alive and well. The annual meeting is the only place that we congregate around our shared identity as epidemiologists, where we revel in the latest prurient gossip about our academic heroes and rivals, and where we set the tone for research and teaching that helps define our collective intellectual and substantive mindset. If I can make some small contribution to the maintenance and evolution of this disciplinary culture, it will be an honor that will truly overcome the annoyance. It would be presumptuous to expect some great innovation at the level of this position, but I can at very least reveal my leanings, as an indication of where I would attempt to make marginal contributions. As a primary focus for SER, I value methods as the thing that binds us together as epidemiologists working in a dizzying multitude of areas. But I refer to methods in a much broader sense than just analytic statistical techniques. We also need improved development in methods for exposure, covariate and outcome measurement (from molecular methods to historical methods) and better ways for systematizing and conveying qualitative information in the research process. I would hope that our meetings would serve to instill a healthy and constructive skepticism of models, be they animal models or statistical models, and that our field would make progress in exploring ways to quantify and convey the necessary uncertainty about these models that characterizes all research endeavors. To merely have some modest influence in encouraging any of these areas of progress would be enough to ward off the inevitable regret of having committed to do one more thing.

Candidate for Executive Committee Member at Large



Ann M. Geiger, MPH, PhD, Associate Professor and Head, Section on Healthcare Systems and Policy, Departments of Social Science and Policy and Epidemiology and Prevention, Division of Public Health Sciences, Wake Forest University School of Medicine

On a dreary February evening twenty-five years ago in Cambridge, MA, I discovered epidemiology and knew at the core of my being that this was the career I had been searching for. The idea of using epidemiologic science to improve the health of populations seemed so much more exciting to me than the noble yet patient-by-patient approach of medicine. Plus, relative to bench science, the field suited my multi-disciplinary and interpersonal tendencies. I believe epidemiology remains one of the most demanding and engaging pursuits in science, and should be a cornerstone of the movement toward interdisciplinary and translational research. At the same time, the field stands in the midst of challenging societal shifts, including concerns about privacy; changes in how our results are disseminated; cessation of funding growth and likely shifts in peer review processes; an increasing volume of multi-site collaborative research; and ongoing questions about the validity of our work. My intent as a Member-at-Large of the SER Executive Committee would be to work with my fellow leaders and the membership to increase the recognition of epidemiology's contributions and strengths, while strategically working to overcome the challenges we face.

I believe my somewhat nontraditional career has given me the ability to view our field from multiple perspectives and to work effectively across our topical interests and institutional affiliations. After majoring in biology and graduating from Harvard-Radcliffe College in 1987, I spent three years as a research assistant at Brigham and Women's Hospital. In a true twist of fate, I was hired solely because I knew how to word process in UNIX. That skill led me to be exposed to lots of internal medicine principles; primary data collection through record reviews and patient interviews; statistical analysis; and manuscript and grant preparation. I loved it all.

My research assistant experience equipped me for a wonderful five years of graduate epidemiology training at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. I decided to obtain a MPH so I would have a broad foundation in public health and the ability to work with colleagues from other disciplines. The MPH program also gave me an internship opportunity in the state public health department. I then pursued a PhD to give me depth of knowledge and skill in epidemiology. While at Michigan, my interest in women's health blossomed.

After graduating, I accepted a research scientist position at Kaiser Permanente Southern California (KPSC), where I spent ten years conducting research in a three million member population base. During my time there I continued to work in women's health, which led first to breast and then to other cancers. I also learned a lot about outcomes and health services research. My position there was akin to an academic position in the sense that I was expected to obtain grants and publish, but different in that I also was expected to serve as an internal consultant and to make sure our research results were translated into practice whenever possible. I had the privilege of being a founding site PI of the HMO-based Cancer Research Network, an experience that sparked my interest in understanding how to conduct multi-site collaborations of benefit to all scientists, institutions, and participants.

While I thrived at KPSC, I found myself wishing for more teaching and mentoring opportunities, and a saner pace of life. So in 2005 I accepted a position in the Division of Public Health Sciences at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine. Since arriving, I have become deeply engaged in the educational, mentoring, and administrative aspects of the institution, while also continuing to pursue my passion for cancer survivorship research.

Overall, I am excited about the future of epidemiology, and believe the keys to our future lie in continuing to refine our scientific methods, develop our junior and mid-career members, and communicate clearly with the public about our results and contributions. I look forward to the opportunity to serve the membership in pursuing these goals.

Candidate for Executive Committee Member at Large

Irene H. Yen, Ph.D., M.P.H. Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine
University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)
San Francisco, CA

I studied both microbiology and political science as an undergraduate. After graduating from college, I did an internship with David Werner author of *Where There is No Doctor* and other books intended for low literacy audiences. David Werner believed that primary health care could be practiced by people in impoverished communities if the information was communicated precisely yet simply. He used simple language and illustrations to provide information about infections, injuries, nutrition, diagnostic techniques, and preventive health measures. I edited one of his books, *Disabled Village Children*, which contained detailed information about what causes muscle contractures and physical therapy to relieve them, causes and treatments for bed sores, building wheelchairs with bicycle wheels, and other appropriate technology strategies for children's disabilities. Interacting with David and the materials for his books highlighted for me how inequitable the world's resources are distributed and how opportunities for people wildly differed. These experiences contributed to my resolve to do work to decrease disparities.

After the internship, I moved to Beijing to teach English at Beijing Medical University, and conducted field observations of rural health care. This gave me the opportunity to observe barefoot doctors, and maternal and child health clinic visits. These experiences reinforced my interest in public health and prevention.

I returned from China and worked as a health educator and a volunteer medic at the Berkeley Free Clinic in Berkeley, California and entered the University of California (UC) Berkeley's epidemiology and biostatistics joint masters program. I was heavily influenced by Professor Leonard (Len) Syme who introduced me to social epidemiology. After the masters degree, I worked for the Centers for Disease Control in Beijing for three years. Then I returned to UC Berkeley for a doctorate in epidemiology studying the influence of neighborhood environment on health behaviors and health status with Professor Len Syme as my advisor.

During my postdoctoral fellowship at UC Berkeley, I expanded my work into racial discrimination and health, analyzing data from a San Francisco bus drivers study. I then worked for two years at the San Francisco Department of Public Health in the Health Inequities Research Unit. I am currently an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. I am affiliated with the Center for Aging in Diverse Communities (CADC), a NIA-funded Resource Center in Minority Aging Research (RCMAR). As a CADC investigator I oversee two studies that focus on how the neighborhood environment affects health of minority elders. I am also an affiliated faculty with the UCSF/UC Berkeley Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society program.

I attended my first SER meeting while a graduate student in 1997. I noticed that there was not a lot of social epidemiology content at that meeting. Several colleagues and I approached the executive committee and proposed two symposia sessions for the 1998 meeting. These sessions, which we organized, "Critical perspectives on the use of race, racism, and socioeconomic variables in epidemiology" and "Beyond individual-level risk factors: new approaches to studying social causation of disease" generated a lot of interest within the SER membership. The two panels included Dolores Acevedo-Garcia, Richard Cooper, Jay Kaufman, John Lynch, and David Williams. At the same time we also initiated a new spotlight session on race and class inequalities. We asked Patricia O'Campo to chair this session. Since 1998 Dr. O'Campo and I have co-chaired the race and class inequalities session at all but two annual meetings.

If I were elected to be a member-at-large for the SER executive committee, I would continue to promote a balanced presence of the current social epidemiology research topics and challenges at the annual meetings. I am also intensely interested in the process and activity of mentoring more junior investigators. Recently, SER has organized student participation in meeting organization and events. I would be interested in working with the student representatives to help them promote their presence in SER and to provide support for their career planning.

Candidate for Executive Committee Member at Large



Stephen K. Van Den Eeden, PhD
Senior Epidemiologist
Division of Research
Kaiser Permanente, Oakland, California

Lecturer, Epidemiology,
Dept. of Health Research and Policy
Stanford University, Palo Alto, California

In seeking the position of Member-at-Large for the Executive Committee, I come as a “rank and file” epidemiologist. What does this mean? It can mean a lot of things, but it primarily means I have spent essentially all of my career in the proverbial trenches, at least one version of them. My research is housed within a large research division of integrated health system, Kaiser Permanente, Northern California. My experience is one of pursuing science in a great public health laboratory, within a soft money environment and with academic evaluations.

My research experience is marked by multiple collaborations across many disciplines, which has given me insight to the range of environments that epidemiologists toil in today.

The challenges to epidemiology and its practitioners are many – from the current NIH funding environment to the need to participate (and succeed) in large collaborative studies, as well as the ones that have existed since the beginning (e.g., accurate and complete exposure, covariate and outcome assessment in properly designed studies – still no easy task).

The role of SER in addressing these challenges is first to provide a home, as it were, to discussing and making known its position the issues. SER also needs to reach out to the other epidemiology organizations, as well as the epidemiology sections of the other scientific organizations, when a collective voice for the discipline is needed. Possibly the primary role of SER is to continue to foster the new generation of epidemiologists. I hope to continue to make SER a center of dialogue for epidemiologists.

SER-SC PRESIDENT'S CORNER by Danielle Iuliano, Ph.D.



**SER-SC President
Danielle Iuliano**

The SER Student Caucus (SER-SC) has planned activities and workshops for the 2008 Annual Meeting (June 24-27, 2008), awarded six travel scholarships to attend the 2008 meeting, solicited nominees for the SER-SC 2008-2009 Executive Board and continued to increase SER membership among students and fellows. SER-SC continues to develop more opportunities for young public health practitioners to grow and develop professionally.

During the 2008 Annual Meeting, SER-SC will sponsor two Meet the Experts sessions which are roundtable discussions focused on specific topics with researchers in the field. We will also sponsor a Noon Time Career Panel Session and a Noon Time Surviving Your Thesis/Dissertation Session. We will also bring back the popular Guided Poster Tours with experts and editors. This year SER-SC will also sponsor two half day workshops. The morning workshop by Dr. Scott Osborne will focus on NIH grant writing and establishing the foundation for your career. The afternoon session by Dr. Steven Hawes will offer information about SAS advanced topics. Additionally, SER-SC will sponsor a Historical Skyscraper Tour of Chicago as well as other social events. We look forward to your participation in our events. Please visit our website for more information about these programs <http://www.epiresearch.org/students/index.html>.

For the first time, SER-SC awarded six \$500 travel scholarships to assist students, post-docs, fellows or trainees to attend the 2008 Annual SER Meeting in Chicago, IL. We received 47 applications this year and the selection process was difficult with so many qualified applicants. We would like to thank the SER Executive Board for selecting our six travel scholarship recipients. Congratulations to Ying Bao, Yueh-Hsiu Chiu, Elizabeth Mostofsky, Melissa Smiley, Sunil Agarwal and Rachelle Beveridge, our 2008 Travel Scholarship winners. We look forward to meeting you in June.

SER-SC just completed the nomination process for the Executive Board 2008-2009. We received nominations for each position. Please review the section in this newsletter to learn more about the future SER-SC officers.

I would like to take an opportunity to thank the SER-SC Executive Board that has served with me during the 2007-2008 year. Your hard work and dedication throughout this year has created some great programs and opportunities for students. I would like to thank you for your support and friendship this year. Thank you to Sara Simonsen, Vanessa Moore, Lizzi Torrone, Caroline Dilworth, Kristal Chiclowska, Erin Sauber-Schatz and Simone Pinheiro.

Please visit our website at <http://www.epiresearch.org/students/index.html> to learn more about our organization and our mission. You will also be able to obtain more information about the opportunities and events that I have shared with you on our website. We are also in the process of developing resources for students and fellows including information on writing and reviewing abstracts, putting together a poster presentation, writing a manuscript and other topics. These resources can be viewed in the resources section of our site, accessible at: <http://www.epiresearch.org/students/resources.html>. Please take a few minutes to review these helpful materials. Additionally, SER-SC maintains a List-serv that is used for general announcements, information about SER and SER-SC events and other epidemiology related issues. If you would like to subscribe to this List-serv, please visit http://hsphsun3.harvard.edu/mailman/listinfo/ser_studentcaucus.

Danielle Iuliano
SER-SC President
University of Pittsburgh

SER-SC Officers 2008-2009

Past President: Danielle Iuliano
President: Vanessa Moore

Office: President Elect
Name: Arijit K. Nandi,
School: John Hopkins School of Public Health
Personal Statement:

Arijit Nandi is running for the position of President Elect. Arijit is a PhD candidate in the Department of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH). Arijit is concerned with the impact of macro-level factors on population health. His thesis work focuses on understanding how economic processes, particularly deindustrialization, influence neighborhood environments and patterns of drug use. In other research, he explores the social epidemiology of common mood-anxiety disorders and substance use disorders and

SER-SC Officers 2008-2009 continued

substance use disorders and outcomes. Other research areas of interest include migration and obesity. After completing his PhD, Arijit will be joining the Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society Scholars program at Harvard University.

Apart from his research endeavors, Arijit co-founded the Social Epidemiology Student Organization (SES.org), a multidisciplinary forum for the dissemination of theory, methods, and findings related to macro-level factors influencing health. Activities include a monthly journal club, an invited speaker series, research-in-progress seminars, and working groups. Arijit hopes his experiences leading a student group will facilitate his service as SER-Student Caucus President-Elect. As President Elect, Arijit looks forward to working with the President and Past President to promote the mission of the SER-Student Caucus.

Office: Secretary

Name: Jennifer A. Smith

School: University of Michigan

Personal Statement:

As a doctoral student in the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Michigan for the past several years, I have focused on research pertaining to the genetic epidemiology of complex diseases, including cardiovascular disease, dementia, and dyslipidemia. At the University of Michigan, I am currently the Doctoral Student Representative to both the Department of Epidemiology Curriculum Committee and the Symposium Planning Committee for the 2008 Doctoral Student Research Symposium: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches Toward Improving Health. I am also the Co-Chair and a founding member of the School of Public Health Doctoral Students group and was previously a member of the Epidemiology Student Organization. As the Secretary of the SER-Student Caucus, these leadership and service experiences will compliment the organizational and administrative skills that I have developed throughout my education and employment. The two fields of my masters degrees, Statistics and Health Management/Policy, both require extreme attention to detail and have further developed my proficiency for accurate documentation and record keeping, effective communication with co-workers, and large-scale data analysis. These skills have been reinforced by employment positions that I have held, including two management positions in survey research studies. In these positions, I was responsible for hiring, training, and supervising interviewers as well as data collection, management, and quality. My diverse background and skills in administration, leadership, and survey data analysis uniquely qualify me to meet the challenges of the Secretary position, and I look forward to supporting and furthering the goals of the SER-Student Caucus.

Office: Membership/Nominations Committee Co-Chair

Name: Whitney R. Robinson

School: University of North Carolina School of Public Health

Personal Statement:

I will receive my PhD in epidemiology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2008. My dissertation explores reasons why obesity prevalence is much greater in young U.S. Black women than in young U.S. Black men. Specifically, the research investigates to what extent adolescent behaviors and family demographics are associated with this gender disparity. I also hold a master's degree in epidemiology from UNC, where I researched the association between early-life body size and rate of prostate cancer later in life.

In September 2008, I will begin a two-year appointment as a Robert Wood Johnson Health & Society Scholar at the University of Michigan. As a Health & Society Scholar, I plan to estimate causal associations between obesity and various health outcomes.

Previous experience that will enable me to serve effectively includes serving as a co-chair of the Speakers Committee of UNC's Minority Health Caucus (2002-2003). In this position, I gained organizational and outreach skills that will be helpful on the SER-SC board.

In addition, since attending my first SER meeting in 2001, I have acquired a long-term perspective on student involvement in SER. I have participated in activities like the SER student workshop and breakfast roundtables at the annual meeting. If elected to the board, I will support the maintenance of a robust roster of activities for students at the annual meeting. As the Membership/Nominations Committee Chair, I will continue enhancing communication between SER and students by recruiting more student-champions to disseminate information to fellow students at the schools.

Office: Membership/Nominations Committee Co-Chair

Name: Karen Schliep

School: University of Utah Public Health Program

Personal Statement:

Originally from Minnesota, I have lived in Utah for the past fifteen years. My educational background includes undergraduate degrees in English (Carleton College, MN) and biology (University of Utah, UT) and a master of science degree in public health (University of Utah, UT). I am broadly interested in the epidemiology of pregnancy, infancy and childhood. My research background includes evaluating energy balance among postpartum adolescents, examining the competitive food environment of

Utah's largest school district, and assessing the development and implementation of school wellness policies within Utah schools. Currently, I am working as a research assistant where I am involved in several projects including peri-conceptional exposure assessment and neonatal outcomes associated with infertility. I am interested in serving as co-chair of the Membership/Nominations Committee. My prior experience as the Student Advisory Committee Chair for our department well prepared me to serve in a leadership position with a student group. My current volunteer positions as Educational Director for the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) Rocky Mountain Chapter, Board Secretary for Girls on the Run Salt Lake and Campus Liaison for the American Public Health Association have also given me valuable experience in membership outreach and recruitment in addition to conference coordinating.

If elected, I would work to promote increased student and fellow membership in SER and also to expand on the SER-SC Champion program. Additionally, I would like to help build the student resource section, using skills I have obtained through the AMWA core and advanced certificate programs.

Office: Program Committee Co-Chair

Name: Derek Ng

School: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Personal Statement:

My name is Derek Ng, a first year epidemiology student at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. After graduating from Yale in 2005, in health psychology and neuroscience, I worked for a small health consulting company for two years. At this job, our mandate was to address policy issues like tobacco control using epidemiology. While managing innovative projects, such as evaluating a national stop-smoking clinical trial, I found my vocational calling in epidemiology.

I am now enrolled full time as a student, developing research skills necessary for sound epidemiologic science. With a background in psychology, industry and epidemiology, I see the need for quality research that uses information in unique ways. I see this first-hand in my current part-time research position at the Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group, preparing meta-analyses of clinical trials. Here, I learned the impetus for the development of the clinicaltrials.gov registry, which is a triumph for the field with wonderful opportunities for improvements. The field is heading in the direction of increased clarity and use of information to answer practical questions, especially as we have more data and technology at our disposal. I would be privileged and honored to contribute however I can as a program committee chair to help present creative research and engage our colleagues with exciting programming at the annual meeting. It is a vibrant time to be an epidemiologist, and I'm very interested to see and help with the clever research the SER-SC will present to address growing public health challenges!

Office: Program Committee Co-Chair

Name: Stella Aslibekyan

School: Harvard School of Public Health

Personal Statement:

This year marks an exciting turn in my journey as an epidemiologist— in June, I will receive my Master's degree from Harvard School of Public Health and move fifty miles south to continue as a doctoral student at the Department of Community Health at Brown University. A perfect fit for my interdisciplinary background, my Ph.D. project will focus on gene-environment interactions in cardiovascular disease epidemiology.

My involvement with SER-SC so far has been fun and rewarding! As a current member of the Program Committee, I am enjoying planning a 'speed-networking' event for our members during the Annual Meeting in Chicago. One of my favorite perks of being an SER-SC member is the chance to interact with other epidemiology students and early-career professionals from across the country, and I will work hard to develop such opportunities for all of our members. To ensure that the connections forged at the Meeting can become meaningful professional relationships and friendships, I plan on creating and moderating a web space (e.g. a Google group) to facilitate post-Meeting follow-up and other communications between members.

If elected to serve as the Program Committee Chair, I will serve the Executive Council and the SER-SC members with dedication, responsibility, and contagious enthusiasm. Thank you for your vote.

Office: Abstract Committee Chair/Treasurer

Name: Michael Lowe

School: University of Utah

Personal Statement:

I started the PhD Public Health Program at the University of Utah in the Summer of 2007 and earned my MSPH at the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Currently I am working at the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) in the HIV program where I am responsible for HIV surveillance and program planning. In the past I worked as an epidemiologist at the UDOH. One thing that I am drawn to is international health and traveling abroad. I lived in Kazakhstan as a Peace Corps volunteer, worked in Russia for the Red Cross, and want to eventually return overseas.

I feel that I could contribute a lot to the SER-SC Executive Council. I have participated on community planning committees where I have learned to understand a variety of viewpoints and then set mutually agreed upon funding and program goals. I also have experience working as a liaison between policy makers, health care professionals, the community, and vulnerable populations.

If elected, I would focus on a few issues. The first would be to get more information out about SER and get more students interested in joining SER. I have worked in public health for ten years and only recently heard of SER. Another focus would be to help students get published in journals. I think that many students would greatly benefit from publishing, but lack the confidence and technical details of how to go about the process.

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JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE by Mary Haan

SER has been participating in an international joint policy committee consisting of representatives of 22 professional organizations involved in epidemiology. The committee meets once a month by telephone. The issues the group discusses include funding in epidemiology, the pros and cons of recent efforts by ASPH to create a certification exam for all public health students, promoting the interests of epidemiologists to the NIH and other scientific bodies, trends in tenure and salary support for epidemiologists in academic settings and concerns about the impact of human subjects regulation on research.

We're on the Web!

<http://www.epiresearch.org>

"The SER is committed to keeping epidemiologists at the vanguard of scientific developments "



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