

Weekly Newsletter January 23-27, 2023

## PQHS NEWS

### UPCOMING EVENT

**Monday, March 20, 2023, at 12:00PM**

**PQHS Annual State of the Department:** All Students, Faculty and Staff are invited and encouraged to attend the PQHS Annual State of the Department meeting. Come hear all the exciting things happening in PQHS. Dean Flotte and Chancellor Collins will address the department. This is an in-person only event, zooming is not an option and will not be recorded. Slides will be provided following the meeting.



**Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> 12:00-1:30 PM in the Faculty Conference Room**

Lunch will be provided. Please click the link below to let me know **whether you plan to attend (yes or no)**. If you answer yes, a link is provided to add the event to your Outlook calendar. **Please reply by Friday, March 3rd.**

<https://arcsapps.umassmed.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=X3JNCMAHRL>

### THIS WEEK IN PQHS & UMMS

**Tuesday, January 24 – 9:00 – 10:00 AM**

**Research Meeting –**

**Presenter:** Kara Smith, MD, Associate Professor of Neurology and Neurosurgery, Co-director, Movement Disorders Division, UMass Chan Medical School

**Title:** Detection of cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease using speech markers: Impact of sex and age on machine learning models

**Brief Description:** Speech acoustic markers have great potential to detect and monitor various medical conditions. In Parkinson's disease (PD), both motor and cognitive dysfunction contribute to changes in speech that can be assessed quantitatively. Machine learning algorithms have been proposed using particular groups of speech characteristics to detect cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease. However, these models are not ready for clinical use because they have been developed in small cohorts in which participant characteristics may vary from the general global population of PD patients. Participant characteristics such as age and sex have not been sufficiently explored to determine how they impact ML model performance. In the general population, there are many sex differences in acoustic speech. These sex differences need to be thoughtfully considered in the world of developing speech markers in PD. I will review what is known about sex differences in the general population and in PD and discuss what we know so far about how ML models may perform in males vs. females.

Click [here](#) to join or call 646 876 9923 Meeting ID: 851 294 7151 **password: smm2020**

**Course in Clinical Trials – Spring, 2023**

**Are you ready to take your molecule or intervention to the next phase of research?** The University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School (UMCMS) Graduate School of Biomedical Science is offering a course in Design and Conduct of Clinical Trials (CTS 609) in the Spring Semester 2023 (January 17 - May 5). This course is open to all UMCMS research and clinical faculty, staff, students, as well as researchers external to UMCMS.

**Description:** The course is intended for the research scientist. The goal is to sharpen the methodological skills required in designing experimental studies for clinical investigators. The course will cover theoretical and practical methods in designing and implementing clinical trials, emphasizing design implications, developing individual study protocols, and



addressing questions of importance in a feasible manner. The course emphasizes the design of intervention studies to achieve specific research objectives by selecting appropriate study samples, endpoints, and trial designs. It will cover not only the basics of clinical trials, including reviews/critiques of major clinical trials, but also new developments in trial design (e.g., stepped wedge designs, adaptive designs, integrated Phase I/II and II/III designs), randomization strategies (e.g., covariate-adjusted randomizations), and trial conduct (e.g., risk-based monitoring, consent processes, difficult environments).

**Dates:** January 18 through May 3, 2023, no class on March 15 – Spring Break

**Times:** Wednesdays, 8:00 – 10:00 AM for live lectures, article reviews, and discussions

**Location:** Zoom

**Lecturer:** [Dr. Bruce Barton](#), Professor in the Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences, is a biostatistician with over 45 years of experience in randomized clinical trials and has served as the Principal Investigator / Director of Data Coordinating Centers for 38 major clinical trials across all phases. Interested researchers should contact Dr. Barton ([bruce.barton@umassmed.edu](mailto:bruce.barton@umassmed.edu)) for further information about the course content. Information on how to register for the course can be found at <https://www.umassmed.edu/gsbs/academic-student-affairs/registration/>.



Postdoctoral Training is starting now and in August 2023. The [PRACCTIS program \(Prevention and Control of Cancer: Training for Change in Individuals and Systems\)](#) at UMass Chan Medical School is now accepting applications for postdoctoral scholars. Funding is available starting now and in August 2023 for fellowships in three specialty areas:

[Cancer Prevention and Control](#)

[Health Communication](#)

[Tobacco and Digital Health Research](#)

We train independent researchers to address critical prevention and control care delivery issues across the cancer continuum, including primary prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. Emphasis is on promoting change in individuals, providers, and systems. Our faculty mentors are leaders in health equity and low resource settings, health behavior change, health informatics, systems change and health policy, health communications, population health sciences, implementation science, and prevention and intervention research. Applicants must plan to pursue an independent research career focused on cancer prevention and control, have earned a doctoral degree (PhD, ScD, MD, DO, etc.), and be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. PRACCTIS is a T32 training program funded by NCI. For more information contact [Barbara Estabrook](#).

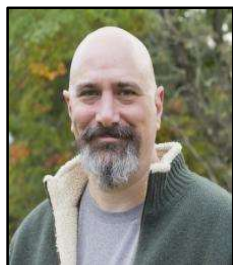
**Transdisciplinary Training in Cardiovascular Research T32 Training Program** - now accepting applications for pre-and post-doctoral trainees. In collaboration with the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, the Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences (PQHS) has established a NHLBI-funded T32 program with the aim of producing a new generation of investigators who have the enthusiasm, knowledge, and skills to make meaningful contributions to cardiovascular research across the translational spectrum. Directed by Catarina Kiefe, MD, PhD (PQHS) and Kevin Donahue, MD (Cardiovascular Medicine), the program is truly transdisciplinary, with investigators working together to expand knowledge beyond discipline-based concepts, theories, and methods. Please see the attached flyer for more information on eligibility and how to apply.

## CONGRATULATIONS



In December of 2022, [\(Julia\) Hua Fang, PhD](#) received “The Scholar of the Year” for 2022. this award is in recognition for outstanding contributions that expanded creative work, knowledge, and scholarship, by the UMASS Faculty Federation at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Only one award per year across all colleges and departments, so only 20 people over the past two decades. It also comes with \$1K cash as an award. Let’s extend a hearty congratulations to Dr. Fang!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Tuesday, January 31, 2023, at 10 AM**

**UMass Chan Center for Clinical & Translational Science Workshop: “Effective Communication of Risk and Uncertainty with Non-Experts”** presented by [Justin Gross, PhD](#), who is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst as well as a core faculty member of the UMass Amherst Computational Social Science Institute (CSSI). Participants will learn about challenges and opportunities with respect to effective communication of risk and uncertainty, including conveyance of probabilistic information, distinguishing between absolute and related risk, and understanding how peoples’ perceptions of uncertainty may depend on what is at stake. The focus will be on how to communicate risk and uncertainty more effectively with non-experts,

including the use of visual techniques and analogies to improve understanding and uptake of information. [Registration is required](#). **Real-time captioning will be provided.**

**Monday, April 3, 2023, at 12 PM**

**Rigor and Reproducibility Seminar: “Sharing Confidential and Sensitive Data?”** presented by [George Alter, PhD](#), Research Professor Emeritus with the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Alter’s research integrates theory and methods from demography, economics, and family history with historical sources to understand demographic behaviors in the past. From 2007 to 2016, Alter was Director of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, the world’s largest archive of social science data, and he is a past president of the Social Science History Association. He has been active in international efforts to promote research transparency, data sharing, and secure access to confidential research data. He is currently engaged in projects to create FAIR vocabularies in population research, to automate the capture of metadata from statistical analysis software, and to compare fertility transitions in contemporary and historical populations. This seminar is given jointly by the UMass Chan Medical School Population & Quantitative Health Sciences, and UMass Boston Gerontology Department and Gerontology Institute. **Click this [link](#) to join the ZOOM presentation; password: 468880.**



## DIVERSITY DIGEST



### **January 27, 2023, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION**

January 27 marks the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust as well as Holocaust Remembrance Day. Both are intended to pay tribute to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust as well as to reaffirm our commitment to antisemitism and education that will prevent future genocides.

January 27<sup>th</sup> was chosen because it marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau on January 27, 1945. Awareness of antisemitism is becoming increasingly important as antisemitic incidents have been on the rise for the last 5 years with 2021 the highest on record (since 1979) and a full 34% increase year over

year. Although the complete yearly numbers for 2022 are not out yet, the rise in antisemitism among celebrities and politicians continues as do person-to-person antisemitic acts. The first ever 50 state Holocaust Awareness Survey among Millennials and Gen Z in 2020 revealed a startling lack of knowledge about how many Jews were murdered and who was responsible for the Holocaust. With antisemitism on the rise, it is more important than ever to educate ourselves and younger generations to ensure that the victims are remembered, and such a tragedy does not happen again. See the [Anti-Defamation League](#) and [Claims Conference](#) for further details.

## FUNDING REMINDERS

**Revised NSF Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending (Other) Support Formats - Now Available in SciENCv and on the NSF Website:** NSF implemented revised versions of the [Biographical Sketch](#) and [Current and Pending \(Other\) Support](#) formats for consistency with the *Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) ([NSF 23-1](#)). The requirement to use the revised formats is effective for proposals submitted or **due on or after January 30, 2023**. These revised formats are now available in [SciENCv](#) and on the [NSF Policy Office website](#). As a reminder, the mandate to use SciENCv only for preparation of these senior personnel documents will go into effect for new proposals submitted or **due on or after October 23, 2023**.

### February 1-2, 2023

#### NIH Grants Conference & Precon Events

Are you new to NIH grants and looking to better understand the processes and policies behind NIH funding? Or are you experienced and want to brush up on the latest policies and information? Consider this your personal invitation to the [2023 NIH Grants Conference](#), a free and virtual event on February 1-2, 2023. During this 2-day live event, NIH and HHS experts will share policies, resources, guidance, and case studies in informative and engaging sessions.

[Registration](#) is free and includes your personal "All Access Pass" to the virtual [NIH Grants Conference 2022-2023 season](#). Once registered and logged into the conference site, you are free to explore the 2-day agenda, on-demand library of related resources, and create your personal schedule.

**2023 King Trust Fellowship Program:** Health Resources in Action has recently launched the 2023 cycle of the Charles A. King Trust Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award Program. In recognition of additional support needed to help researchers achieve their independence, we have increased the award amount to include stipend, fringe, and a flexible expense allowance. We encourage you to disseminate this opportunity to eligible faculty, clinicians, and postdoctoral researchers. Join us for the King Trust Fellowship Office House ([Register here](#)), to be held on Thursday, January 19, 2023 from 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM. This informational session will be used to give applicants and institutional officers an overview of the program and answer any general questions about the program.

**The Herman G. Berkman Diabetes Clinical Innovation Fund** is accepting grant abstracts through February 28<sup>th</sup>. The annual award supports the development of clinical care initiatives that would not normally find funding through research grant programs. You'll find the eligibility guidelines, grant application, and learn about past awarded projects [HERE](#).

**National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis \(ALS\) Intermediate Patient Population Expanded Access \(U01 Clinical Trial Required\)](#).** NINDS intends to commit up to \$75 million in FY 2023 to fund 3-5 awards in support of the conduct of scientific research utilizing data from expanded access for investigational drugs or biological products. These applications will target expanded access for intermediate size populations of patients living with ALS who are not eligible for ongoing clinical trials for the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, or cure of ALS. The maximum project period is 4 years. The opportunity will open on Feb. 23, 2023, and **APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY MARCH 23, 2023, AT 5 P.M. LOCAL TIME OF THE APPLICANT ORGANIZATION.**

For additional information, please refer to [the RFA](#) posted on the NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information (Funding Opportunity Announcement Number: RFA-NS-23-012).

## UMASS CHAN REMINDER



UMass Chan Medical School's [Office of Communications](#) is initiating regularly scheduled opportunities where faculty, staff, and students can have a professional headshot taken. Photos are taken every other Wednesday from 9 AM to 3 PM on the fifth floor of the Sherman Center by the elevators. Each session caps at 50 people. Anyone at UMass Chan can sign up using this document found on the SharePoint site. **See updated link for new options: [Photo Sign-Ups \(office365.com\)](#)**

**REQUIRED IT Security and Privacy Training:** With the new year upon us, I want to remind everyone to complete the required Information Security and Privacy training. The 25-minute training module teaches users how to identify and prevent cyberattacks, reinforcing knowledge that applies to the use of technology at work and at home.

**This annual training is mandatory without exception for all members of the UMass Chan community.**

If you have not already completed the training, please log onto the [Information Security and Privacy training](#) portal (provided by InfoSecInstitute.com) and complete the training as soon as possible.

*PQHS Weekly will be sent to all members of PQHS on Monday mornings. The intent is to provide a snapshot of what is going on that week in PQHS and to share our faculty and staff activities with the department. We depend on you to provide the items we need to share. Please send suggestions of events, faculty invited seminars & talks, honors, student thesis presentations, and news – new babies born! – to Kellie ([kellie.armstrong@umassmed.edu](mailto:kellie.armstrong@umassmed.edu)) & Sarah ([sarah.yeboah@umassmed.edu](mailto:sarah.yeboah@umassmed.edu)) by Friday each week.*