

EPIDEMIOLOGY DOCTORAL STUDENTS

2011-2012

Karen Bartley

Fall 2008

Karen Bartley obtained her B.A. in Development Studies from UC Berkeley in 2002 and went to work for the Center for Health Improvement as a research analyst, coordinating, among others, a Hepatitis-C project and a tobacco use prevention project. While working on her Epi/Biostat M.P.H. at UCB, she worked as a graduate student researcher at the Northern California Childhood Leukemia Study and is currently conducting an analysis using data collected through the NCCLS, examining the relationship between postnatal x-ray exposures and childhood leukemia. Karen plans to continue her study of cancer epidemiology in the Epidemiology Ph.D. program. By the way, she speaks Italian.

Stella Beckman

Fall 2011

Stella received her BS in Environmental Toxicology from UC Davis in 2007 and her MPH in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from the UC Berkeley School of Public Health in 2009. Her thesis topic was changes in female fertility associated with exposure to the pesticide DDT. During 2009-2011 she was a CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellow at the California Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Branch. She is interested in occupational health epidemiology.

Jade Benjamin-Chung

Fall 2011

Jade obtained an MPH in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from UC Berkeley in 2008. During her master's she worked on the evaluation of the health impacts of a microfinance program in Haiti. Upon graduating she worked with community health organizations on the Thailand-Burma border to build their health information systems capacity. She currently works for the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh on an evaluation of a large water and sanitation program run by UNICEF in Bangladesh. Her research interests include epidemiologic methods, impact evaluation and water, hygiene and sanitation interventions in developing countries.

Hope Biswas

Fall 2009

Hope received her B.A. in Psychology from Wellesley College in 2003 and her Sc.M. in Infectious Disease Epidemiology from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2007. She is currently investigating prediction of dengue virus infection and dengue disease severity in a cohort of Nicaraguan children for her dissertation. Her interests are in infectious disease, emerging infections and global health. .

Benjamin Chaffee

Fall 2009

Ben received a BA from Williams College in 2002 and completed his DDS from the UCSF School of Dentistry prior to an MPH in Epidemiology from UC Berkeley in 2009. As a dental student, Ben investigated the influence of public dental insurance programs on the quality and

range of dental services provided in California's Central Valley. As an MPH student, Ben examined the influence of periodontal disease on systemic conditions - specifically death from cancer, as published to date. He remains interested in the impact of oral health care delivery mechanisms on general health and well being.

Yvonne Cheng

Fall 2006

Yvonne completed her MD degree at Tulane University and MPH at Berkeley. She is an obstetrician at UCSF. Her goal is to become a top epidemiologist, and to improve perinatal outcome. This is Yvonne's last semester.

Giovanna Cruz

Fall 2011

Giovanna earned her M.S. in Epidemiology from the University of Arizona. Her thesis was on the association between reproductive factors and breast tumor subtypes. Prior to enrolling in the MS program, Giovanna worked as an analyst with a health care marketing research consulting company. Her previous academic training was in political science and history. She obtained a B.A. from Georgetown University and a M.Sc. from the London School of Economics. Her M.Sc. course of study was on the politics of development of Latin America. Her interests include cancer epidemiology and innovative epidemiologic methods.

Sudeb Dalai

Fall 2009

After receiving his B.S. in Neuroscience from MIT, Sudeb went on to medical school at Stanford University to study molecular virology. He completed his M.S. in Epidemiology and is currently working on his M.D. at Stanford University. In the near future, Sudeb plans to provide strategies to manage, structure, and parse clinical/virologic data concerning HIV pathogenesis, treatment cohorts, and drug resistance to aid in efficient and effective application of scientific findings to help guide clinicians, treatment panels, and international health organizations in scaling-up global HIV therapy and developing vaccine strategies.

Samantha Ehrlich

Fall 2007

Samantha received her Bachelor's in Biology and Women's Studies from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and MPH in Maternal and Child Health from UC Berkeley. While at Berkeley, she had worked as a researcher at the California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS Epidemiology Branch (OA) and was the first author to publish the report entitled "HIV Risk Assessment of Latino Day Laborers". She currently works as a Project Coordinator at the Kaiser Permanente Division of Research (DOR) in Oakland, performing an intervention study in treatment for gestational diabetes and examining cancer-risk associated with use of a diabetes drug. If all goes according to plan, Samantha will finish in December.

John Paul Ekwaru

Fall 2008

John completed his Bachelor's in Statistics at Makerere University in Uganda and his M.Sc. in Biostatistics at McMaster University in Canada. After receiving his master's, he worked as a lecturer and biostatistician at his alma-mater in Uganda and landed a job as a Statistician at CDC-Uganda. Since then, he has participated in various investigations concerning malaria, HIV, and pharmacologic

intervention efficacy. His plans are to return to Uganda to predict and evaluate the efficacy of Uganda's comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and care program.

Ruth Emerson

Fall 2010

Ruth received her B.S. in biological sciences and her M.S. in earth systems from Stanford University. After graduating she became a research technician with a Carnegie Institution for Science regional-scale ecology group. Several research trips to the tropics piqued her interest in the interface between global health and the environment. She would like to work in developing countries and study the impact of environmental change on human health.

Ayse Ercumen

Fall 2009

Ayse Ercumen has a background in environmental engineering with a B.S. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an M.S. from UC Berkeley with a focus on water quality. She worked as an environmental consultant specializing in drinking water treatment systems before starting her M.P.H. in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at UC Berkeley in 2007. She is now a first year Ph.D. student in Epidemiology focusing on waterborne infectious disease. Her research interests are low-cost water, sanitation and hygiene interventions in developing countries and water quality issues in water distribution networks in developed countries.

Jahan Fahimi

Fall 2010

I received my B.S. in Biochemistry from UC San Diego in 2001 and M.D. from NYU School of Medicine in 2006. I concurrently pursued an M.P.H. in Quantitative Methods from the Harvard School of Public Health while in medical school. I completed my residency in Emergency Medicine at Alameda County Medical Center - Highland Hospital in Oakland, CA in 2010, serving as Chief Resident during my last year. My research focus will be on creating an Emergency Department based surveillance system to better understand social forces that impact emergency medical care utilization as well as to quantify and measure community health and well-being.

Stephen Francis

Fall 2011

Stephen has diverse interests within epidemiology that are piqued by diseases of an unknown etiology and center on connecting the micro to macro. He holds a MS in geography from the University of Nevada and a MS in epidemiology from UC Berkeley. His current work investigates spatial clustering using GIS and metagenomic viral discovery to test the long hypothesized role of a virus in the etiology of childhood leukemia. His research is focused within the California Childhood Leukemia Study at UC Berkeley.

Sara Gale

Fall 2008

Sara finished her bachelor's in the interdisciplinary field of Science, Technology, and Society at Vassar College in New York and just recently completed her M.P.H. at Berkeley. In the span of her working-career, she has exercised multiple disciplines: some examples include teaching young children at a nursery school, volunteering at Vassar brother's Hospital in the Post-Cardiac, Orthopedic, and Cancer Unit, contributing to neurological research at Rockefeller University, and

assisting in research and surveillance of cancer cases diagnosed in the state of New York at the State Department of Health. She currently works as a research analyst for a community-based asthma program in Oakland, investigating factors that contribute to disproportionate burden of disease among urban children and evaluating potential solutions, and is particularly interested in complex diseases, such as Asthma.

Michaela George

Fall 2010

Michaela, a Bay Area native, graduated from Middlebury College with a BA in Anthropology / Sociology and a minor in Biochemistry. She worked for three years at UCSF with the Hauser Multiple Sclerosis Genetics Group on a study attempting to find a genotype/phenotype association in MS. Then she moved back to the east coast to obtain her MPH in Epidemiology from Boston University School of Public Health. While there, she worked full time in the Division of Pediatrics in the School of Medicine at Boston University. She worked on multiple behavioral intervention studies using automated telephone technology to target obese children and their parents. At Berkeley, Michaela intends to use her doctoral degree to bridge her social and behavioral science background with her interest in genetic epidemiology.

Caitlin Gerdtz

Fall 2009

After spending three years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador (2002-2005), Caitlin went on to earn her MHS in population, family and reproductive health from The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2007. Over the past two years she has dedicated her time to two clinical trials focused on gender and female controlled methods of HIV prevention in sub Saharan Africa. As a doctoral student, Caitlin hopes to pursue her interest in social epidemiology, solidify her knowledge of epidemiologic and research methods, and actualize her commitment to translating research findings into evidence-based policies and programs. Her current work centers on maternal mortality reduction in Africa and South Asia with The Bixby Center for Population, Health, and Sustainability.

Sidra Goldman-Mellor

Fall 2007

Sidra received a BA in biological anthropology from Cornell University, and worked for two years doing health policy research at the National Opinion Research Center in Washington, D.C. She completed her MPH in UC Berkeley's Health and Social Behavior program in 2007. Part of her dissertation research is being conducted in collaboration with Andrew Steptoe at University College London, and focuses on the relationship between early-life stressful experiences, neuroendocrine and immunologic responses to stress, and psychological problems over the lifecourse. She is interested generally in psychiatric epidemiology and the evolutionary basis of mood and anxiety disorders, as well as the relationship between psychiatric problems and fertility.

Joshua Gruber

Fall 2009

Joshua received a B.S. in Fermentation Science from U.C. Davis and worked for several years as a wine chemist and a brewer. He completed his MPH in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at UCB in 2009. As part of research initiated during his MPH work, Joshua is currently working on a pilot randomized control trial evaluating the health impact of point-of-use water treatment

systems being installed in rural Mexican ranches. He is still working out exactly what he wants to do when he grows up.

Irene Headen

Fall 2010

After earning her Bachelors of Science in Neuroscience at MIT, Irene went on to work on health insurance reform at the Health Policy Center at The Urban Institute. While at the Urban Institute, her research focused on econometric modeling of the coverage and cost impacts of national and state-level health reform, specifically investigating the effects of Medicaid reform. As a doctoral student, she plans pursue her research interest in social epidemiology, focusing on the relationship between social environment and health disparities. She hopes to eventually use the methodological skills developed during her doctoral study to further investigate the nature of racial health disparities and ways to eliminate such disparities.

Alexandra Hernandez

Fall 2005

Alexandra received her MPH from UC Berkeley, and has been working with the UCSF Institute for Global Health and Center for AIDS Prevention. Her interests include HIV prevention and treatment in developing countries, HIV in India, and the use of traditional and alternative medicines in the treatment of HIV. Alexandra plans to file her dissertation this semester.

Ling-I Hsu

Fall 2009

Ling-I received her B.A. in Biochemistry from National Taiwan University and her M.P.H. in Chronic Disease Epidemiology at Yale University. She worked on a genome-wide case-control study which examined variants in mitochondrial genome and Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) for her Masters thesis. After she completed her M.P.H degree, she worked as a post-graduate associate at Yale and conducted research in copy number variations in carinoid. Ling-I hopes to continue working in public health related area after her completion of her PhD degree.

Deborah Karasek

Fall 2011

Deb received her BA in Human Biology from Stanford University, and her MPH from UC Berkeley with an emphasis in Epidemiology/Biostatistics. Since completing her MPH, she has worked as a research manager at Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH) at UCSF. In this position she coordinated several studies to analyze the social and economic determinants of unintended pregnancy and contraceptive use and managed data collection for a statewide demonstration and evaluation of provision of early abortion care. As a doctoral student, Deb hopes to pursue her interests in the application of social epidemiologic methods to reproductive health research.

Murray Lee

Fall 2006

Murray is a family physician specializing in rural and remote medicine. He received his medical degree from the University of Calgary, and MPH from UC Berkeley. Murray's primary interest is in the built environment and its impact on human health and behavior. He is currently on withdrawal in Canada.

Michelle Lesar**Fall 2003**

Michelle earned a BA with honors in human biology from Stanford University and received an MPH in epidemiology and biostatistics from UC Berkeley. She has worked for the US Department of Veterans Affairs and the Center for the Health Assessment of Mothers and Children of Salinas. Michelle's dissertation, which will be filed this semester, will consist of a multi-level analysis of the effects of psychosocial factors and the physical environment on children's health in the Salinas Valley. Michelle plans to have a career that includes research, teaching, and mentoring.

Hannah Leslie**Fall 2011**

Hannah graduated from Stanford University with a degree in Human Biology and later received her MPH from Berkeley in 2009 from the department of Health and Social Behavior. She has worked at the National Institutes of Health and at UCSF, focusing on the response to HIV in East Africa. Particular areas of interest include monitoring and evaluation of HIV programs and the application of social epidemiology methods to global health questions, particularly the role of gender in disease transmission and progression.

Yen-Yu (Raymond) Lo**Fall 2009**

After neurology residency at Tzu Chi Hospital, Taiwan, Raymond furthered his clinical research training at the Parkinson's Institute and Stanford. Raymond's focus is clinical epidemiology of neurodegenerative disorders including Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's dementia. He plans to apply neuroimaging techniques to early detection of dementia in an aging cohort. His career goal is to establish a large aging cohort back in Taiwan to study epidemiology of neurodegeneration in Chinese community.

Julia Marcus**Fall 2010**

Julia earned her BA in Sociology and Women's Studies from Wesleyan University in 2003 and her MPH in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at UC Berkeley in 2008. She spent the following three years working as an epidemiologist at the STD section of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. She is about to start her second year as a PhD student in epidemiology, and her doctoral work will be related to HIV prevention trials. In her spare time, she cooks, climbs, plays Beatles songs on the piano, and hangs out with the chickens in her backyard.

John Metcalfe**Fall 2008**

Dr. Metcalfe is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco and a doctoral candidate in Epidemiology at the University of California, Berkeley. His research interests include diagnosis and transmission of drug resistant tuberculosis in HIV prevalent settings, diagnostic test evaluation, risk prediction, and causal inference. He has research collaborations in Harare, Zimbabwe (Biomedical Research and Training Institute, University of Zimbabwe/UCSF Clinical Trials Unit, and Hanoi, Vietnam (CDC Tuberculosis Trials Consortium). Dr. Metcalfe has also worked as an international technical consultant to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Program for Appropriate

Technology in Health (PATH), and USAID in national TB program evaluation and multidrug resistant tuberculosis operational plan development.

Ana-Maria Mora

Fall 2008

Ana-Maria received her M.D. and M.P.H. from the University of Costa Rica. She worked as a physician in the public health care system in Costa Rica and eventually transitioned towards a more research-oriented career path at the National University of Costa Rica. While co-investigating studies involving occupational diseases and children's health, she spends her spare time as a physician in the emergency room at her previous workplace. Ana-Maria is particularly interested in the relation of pre- and postnatal exposure to pesticides and their effects on children's health and neurodevelopment and her plans are to develop a birth-cohort study in Costa Rica to inform policy makers and help build an understanding of the effects of pesticide exposure on child-health.

Shilpa Nayak

Fall 2003

Shilpa earned her medical degree in England. She worked as a Specialist Registrar in Public Health and completed her MPH in the UK prior to joining the doctoral program at Berkeley. Her dissertation will explore the association between self-rated health status and risk factor profiles of multidimensional health determinants in a young population.

Mayuri Panditrao

Fall 2008

Mayuri completed her B.S. in Microbiology from the University of Pune, India and received a Master's in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology from the University of Hull in the U.K. After working as a Junior Specialist at a research Lab in UCSF, she joined UC Berkeley and completed an M.P.H. in Infectious Diseases and M.S. in Epidemiology. She is currently interested in the interaction of socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors of diseases, and strategies to address public health challenges in the developing world. For her dissertation, Mayuri plans to work on her on-going research on the use of GIS to predict outbreaks of vector-borne diseases such as malaria.

Lauren Ralph

Fall 2010

After completing her B.S. in Microbiology at UC Santa Barbara, Lauren received her MPH at Berkeley in 2006 with an emphasis in Maternal and Child Health. Her master's thesis focused on understanding the relationship between age at first sex and subsequent contraceptive use among U.S. teens. Since completing her MPH, Lauren has worked as a project coordinator at the Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health at UC San Francisco. Her projects have ranged from statewide evaluations of teen pregnancy and family planning service programs to qualitative research on pregnancy intentions and decision-making. Lauren's research interests include the behavioral and cultural aspects of reproductive health, program evaluation, and adolescent and young adult health.

Sujit Rathod

Fall 2008

Sujit graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park, with Bachelor's degrees in Biology and Government. He completed his MSc in Control of Infectious Diseases from the

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, where he discovered the wonders and horrors of the guinea worm. Before enrolling at UC Berkeley, he worked at the Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, DC, as a research study coordinator, and then for UCSF as a data team manager in Bangalore, India. He spent the 2010-2011 academic year in Lusaka, working on a study of mortality trends with the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia.

Meenakshi Subbaraman

Fall 2007

Meenakshi Subbaraman attended UC Santa Barbara where she received a BS in Statistics and Applied Probability and a BA in Philosophy. She completed an MS in Statistics at Stanford University in 2007 and is expected to complete her PhD in Epidemiology in 2011. She is currently a research associate and pre-doctoral fellow the Alcohol Research Group in Emeryville. Her research interests include causal mechanisms of behavioral and pharmaceutical treatments for alcoholism, causal inference approaches, direct and indirect effect estimation, and time-series methods. Although her primary focus is the application of causal inference methods to questions regarding substance abuse and mediation, her prior projects include HIV/AIDS work in Kenya, mental health service use, and birth outcomes.

Aracely Tamayo

Fall 2009

Aracely received her B.A. in Psychology from Stanford University before serving two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Federated States of Micronesia. She attended the University of Washington for graduate school where she received a MSW in policy practice and an MPH with a focus on Maternal Child Health. Aracely currently coordinates a UCSF diabetes and acculturation study of low income patients in the Bay Area and Chicago. She is interested in better understanding the way in which social influences contribute to health disparities and to the incidence and progression of chronic diseases such as diabetes.

Divya Vohra

Fall 2011

Divya earned her ScB in cognitive neuroscience from Brown University. During and after college, she was active in community-based movements to end gender-based violence and promote reproductive justice, which first sparked her interest in public health. She spent several years working on projects to build capacity in the nonprofit and social enterprise sectors before coming to UC Berkeley, where she earned her MPH in epidemiology and biostatistics in 2011. As a doctoral student, Divya hopes to pursue her research interests in family planning and gender-based violence, and to translate that research into policies and programs that improve sexual and reproductive health.

Ann Weber

Fall 2009

Ann completed her MPH in Epidemiology/Biostatistics at UC Berkeley in 2007. Since that time, she has conducted data analysis of early child development outcomes for two programs: *Oportunidades*, a poverty reduction program in Mexico, and SEECALINE, a nutrition program in Madagascar supported by the World Bank. In addition, she contributed to the successful launch of Levi Strauss & Co.'s global Employee HIV/AIDS Program, and is currently helping to set up their monitoring and evaluation system. Her main interest is in implementing and validating solutions to inequities that lead to poor health and development in children.

Paul Wesson**Fall 2011**

Paul earned his BA in Human Biology from Stanford University in 2006. His previous research at the CDC and the San Francisco Department of Public Health on HIV infection in at-risk groups has influenced his current research interests in the behavioral and cultural dynamics that modify infectious disease progression. Motivated by his experience as a community health Peace Corps volunteer in Namibia, Paul plans to incorporate community-based participatory research methods when examining this relationship as a doctoral student. Upon completing his training at Berkeley, Paul hopes to join the Epidemic Intelligence Service and continue to work for the government on a national level.

Miranda Worthen**Fall 2007**

Miranda Worthen received her BA from Harvard College in 2001 and completed her M.Phil in International Development at Oxford University in 2006. Her prior research has focused on the impact of conflict on vulnerable populations. Her masters thesis examined the impact of civil war in Nepal on patterns of sex trafficking. She currently co-coordinates a project using participatory action research to examine and improve community-based reintegration of girl mothers who were child soldiers in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and northern Uganda.

Yun (Tara) Zhang**Fall 2010**

Yun (Tara) Zhang received a BS in Psychology and a BA in Economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After her undergraduate program, she worked as an analyst in the Public Health and Policy Research division of RTI International, assisting in evaluations of state and federal public health programs. She recently finished her MPH in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at UC Berkeley where she became interested in the health impact of public policies that affect the social and built environment. In the future, Tara hopes to conduct social epidemiology research with direct applications to inform policy decisions that are outside the scope of traditional public health influence.