

NHS Student Newsletter

Dear NHS Students, Faculty, and Alumni

Spring 2020 has been unprecedented and challenging. We hope that you and your loved ones are staying well and healthy during this pandemic. We added a new section related to grad student life under these unexpected times and hope you find some helpful tips on productivity for working remotely.

On a brighter note, Spring 2020 was also unprecedented because we had our highest number of PhD graduates in our program! Congratulations to our nine new PhD graduates! Please keep in touch with the NHS program and serve as alumni mentors as you move further in your careers. In Fall 2020, we will welcome the new NHS cohort: Katherine Alonso, Melissa Chapnick, Helaina Huneault, Kasthuri Sivalongan, and Wilhemina Quarpong.

Best wishes to first-years gearing up for the comprehensive exams in June!

We (Paula and Natalia) will be handing over the NHS Newsletter to the new leaders, Ben Cousineau and Jane Obi. We enjoyed reading and compiling your great achievements and milestones for the last two years! As always, please email us about any of your accomplishments or events that you want listed!

Cheers,

Paula, Natalia, Jane and Ben

CONFERENCES

* As of the release of newsletter, these conferences are still planning on an in-person meeting.

Nutrition 2020 (American Society for Nutrition)

When: June 1-4, 2020
Where: Virtual conference
More information here

American Diabetes Association

When: June 12-16, 2020
Where: Virtual conference

More information here

ANH Academy Week

When: June 29- July 3, 2020
Where: Virtual conference
More information here

Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior *

When: July 18-21, 2020 Where: San Diego, CA More information here

FNCE (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics) *

When: October 17-20, 2020 Where: Indianapolis, IN More information here

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Expo *

When: Oct 24-28, 2020 Where: San Francisco, CA More information here

Obesity Week (Obesity Society Conference) *

When: November 2-6, 2020

Where: Atlanta, GA

More information here

Society for Epidemiologic Research *

When: December 15-18, 2020

Where: Boston, MA

More information here

NHS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Moriah Bellissimo (5th year)

Successfully defended her dissertation: "Integrated Clinical and Metabolic Phenotyping of Adults with Hidden Adiposity".

Catherine Cioffi (5th year)

Successfully defended her dissertation: "Altered lipid partitioning in youth: Examining the dietary determinants and cardiometabolic consequences".

Siran He (5th year)

Successfully defended her dissertation: "Improved Nutrition in Early Life and Cardiometabolic Outcomes in Guatemala".

Rebecca Jones (5th year)

Successfully defended her dissertation: "Dietary Integration: Health Implications of Migration to the United States".

Maria Jose Ramirez (5th year)

Successfully defended her dissertation: "Early-life nutrition, child growth, and adult cognitive and socioemotional functioning in Guatemala".

Joseph Roberts (5th year)

Successfully defended his dissertation: "When Nutrition Meets Bone: Modulation of Inflammatory Signals for Skeletal Homeostasis and Repair".

Joe will begin a post-doctoral fellowship at Emory School of Medicine beginning in June.

This semester he received three awards: the Donald B. McCormick Award, John B. Lyon Award, and the NHS Student Mentor Award.

Joe had two manuscripts accepted/published this semester:

- Gutiérrez OM, Porter AK, Viggeswarapu M, Roberts JL, Beck GR. Effects of dietary phosphorus and calcium to phosphorus ratio on mineral metabolism and cardiometabolic health.
 J Nutr Biochem. 2020 [Epub ahead of print] doi: 10.1016/j.jnutbio.2020.108374.
- Roberts JL, Liu G, Paglia DN, Kinter CW, Fernandes LM, Lorenzo J, Hansen MF, Arif A, Drissi H.
 Deletion of Wnt5a in osteoclasts results in bone loss through decreased bone formation. Ann
 NY Acad Sci. 2020; 1463: 45–59.

Additionally, he submitted one abstract for the Nutrition 2020 meeting, which will now be held virtually: Roberts JL, Bellissimo MP, Taibl K, Uppal K, Jones DP, Drissi H, Ziegler TR, Alvarez JA. Novel Metabolic Pathways Associated with Serum Bone Turnover Markers in Healthy Young Adults. Nutrition 2020.

Shruthi Cyriac (4th year)

Shruthi was selected for an oral presentation at the ANH Academy Week Research Conference.

[The team is experimenting a new virtual format of presenting the selected abstracts from June 30th to July 2nd. There will be thematic animations, pre-recorded video presentations and journal club discussions – details are being worked out]

Additionally, she contributed to a global consultation on Double Fortified Salt, initiated by the Iodine Global Network. A steering group of global experts provided guidance and the consultation has submitted a series of five background papers for publication in a journal supplement. Shruthi co-authored paper #3 on DFS efficacy and effectiveness with Leila Larson (NHS alumna) and colleagues from Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. Larson, L. M., Cyriac, S., Djimeu, E.W., Mbuya, M.N.N, Neufeld, L.M (Under Review) Can double fortification of salt with iron and iodine reduce anemia, iron deficiency anemia, iron deficiency, iodine deficiency, and functional outcomes? Evidence of efficacy, effectiveness, and safety. Journal of Nutrition

Kristine Dennis (4th year)

Kristine had two conference abstracts/posters accepted:

Concentrations of phytochelatins, plant-derived metal-binding compounds, in commonly consumed fruits and vegetables. Dennis KK, Liu KH, Go YM, Jones DP. National Nutrient Databank Conference, April 2020 (canceled due to COVID-19). Abstract accepted.

Impact of food processing on concentrations of metal-binding phytochelatins in plant-based foods. Dennis KK, Liu KH, Go YM, Jones DP. ASN Nutrition 2020, May 2020. Abstract accepted. ePoster presentation (virtual) due to COVID-19.

Whitney Leet (4th year)

Whitney had a paper published recently:

Do WL, Conneely K, Gabram-Mendola S, et al. Obesity-associated methylation in breast tumors: a possible link to disparate outcomes? Breast Cancer Res Treat. 2020;181(1):135-144.

Ahlia Sekkarie (4th year)

Ahlia had a paper accepted for publication in Annals of Hepatology: "Prevalence of NAFLD in Guatemala following exposure to a protein-energy nutrition intervention in early life".

She had two posters accepted at ASN Nutrition 2020:

- ALT Trends Through Childhood and Adolescence and Association with Hepatic Steatosis at 24
 Years
- Prevalence of NAFLD in Guatemala Following Exposure to a Protein-Energy Nutrition Intervention in Early Life

Ahlia was awarded the 2020 RSPH Livingston Fellow

Larelle Bookhart (3rd year)

Larelle successfully defended her dissertation proposal: "Determinants of early infant feeding practices in U.S. hospitals".

Miranda Cook (3rd year)

Miranda successfully defended her dissertation proposal: "Evaluation of a produce prescription program tailored for low-income adults".

Priya Gupta (2nd year)

Priya submitted abstracts to the American Society of Nutrition, Southeastern Pediatric Research Conference, and the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. So far, two have been accepted as poster presentations. She has also co-authored two papers that have been submitted for peer review.

Paula-Dene Nesbeth (2nd year)

Paula had a conference abstract accepted to ASN Nutrition 2020:

"An Untargeted Metabolomic Study of the Effects of Vitamin D and/or Calcium Supplementation Among Individuals at High Risk for Colorectal Neoplasms."

Sonia Tandon (2nd year)

Sonia had a conference abstract accepted to ASN Nutrition 2020:

"The Effect of Maternal Fatty Acid Desaturase Single Nucleotide Polymorphism rs174602 and Prenatal Supplementation with Docosahexaenoic Acid on the Offspring Metabolome" was accepted at Nut rition 2020.

Brigitte Pfluger (1st year)

Brigitte was recently selected as a 2020-21 Global Fellow for the Halle Institute for Global Research and awarded \$4,000 to conduct research.

UPCOMING NHS DISSERTATION DEFENSES

• Lucas Gosdin: Wednesday, June 10th at 3:30 pm

POSTDOCTORAL AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

(AGGREGATED HERE SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEARCH THROUGH HUNDREDS OF ARCHIVED EMAILS)

University of Kansas Medical Center - Postdoctoral Positions (Lawrence, KS)

The Center for Physical Activity and Weight Management supports research, training and clinics for the prevention and treatment of obesity in children and adults. Interests include all components of energy balance, metabolic syndrome, weight management delivery systems, technology, brain function, special populations (those with intellectual and physical disabilities), rural populations, and others. Currently, the Center has 8 funded R01 projects from the National Institutes of Health to investigate exercise and

nutrition for prevention and treatment of obesity in adults and children including those with physical and intellectual disabilities. In addition, since 1986 the Center has maintained an ongoing clinical treatment program termed the Weight Control Research Project designed to provide weight loss and weight maintenance for adults.

Full position description here

PennState College of Health and Human Development - Postdoctoral Scholar (University Park, PA)

The initial position is guaranteed for one year; funding is available for yearly appointments contingent upon satisfaction performance. The position provides salary and benefits based on those for NIH postdoctoral fellow. Candidates will have a PhD in nutrition, public health, human development and family studies, psychology, or a related field. We are especially interested in candidates with experience in intervention development and delivery and/or strong quantitative and analytical skills, with proficiency in SAS preferred. To be considered for the position please submit a cover letter, CV, and research statement, along with the names of 3 academic references. The position will remain open until filled, but review will begin March 1, 2020.

Full position description here

Albert Einstein College of Medicine - Postdoctoral Position, Life Style Factors, Diabetes and Cardiometabolic Diseases (New York City, NY)

Job Description:

The Department of Epidemiology and Population Health at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine is expanding our team, at the postdoctoral level, to advance new research initiatives on the epidemiology of physical activity and cardiometabolic disease. Einstein is a leading biomedical institution, located in New York City, with a strong commitment to excellence in research. The Department of Epidemiology and Population Health is well recognized for its multi-disciplinary programs in epidemiologic and prevention research.

Building upon major NIH-initiated cohort studies and clinical trials, our areas of research focus include inflammatory determinants of cardiometabolic disease among multiethnic populations; nutritional epidemiology; and multi-omics research (genomics, transcriptomics, epigenetics, metabolomics). Projects include large and small cohort studies and collaborations: Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos (HCHS/SOL); Women's Health Initiative (WHI); Multicultural Healthy Diet Study to Reduce Cognitive Decline & Alzheimer's Disease Risk (MHD).

We are seeking a highly motivated applicant with outstanding training in epidemiology of lifestyle factors, specifically physical activity and nutrition. While cardiometabolic disease, nutrition and physical activity are the main focus of this position, individuals with interests in related conditions and risk factors are welcome to apply. Experience in analysis of accelerometry data is a plus.

Full position description here

Novartis - Postdoctoral Scholar, Genetics-based target discovery (Cambridge, MA)

NIBR is seeking a talented scientist for a 4-year postdoctoral fellowship to employ human genetics for drug discovery in the Novartis Biologics Center. The candidate will be part of a multi-disciplinary team of bench scientists and computational biologists that mine genotype-phenotype databases, identify disease-modifying gene variants in silico, confirm these functional variants in vitro, and link these variants to disease in vivo. The candidate will work within this team as part of either molecular biology or computational efforts, depending on the candidate's skills. The fellowship will provide the opportunity to publish in academic journals and gain industry experience. A competitive candidate may have experience in one or more of the following disciplines: human genetics, molecular biology, protein biochemistry, cell biology, or computational biology.

DSM - Scientific Leader, Nutrition Science & Advocacy (Parsippany, NJ)

DSM is hiring a Scientific Leader in the North America Nutrition Science and Advocacy team. The position requires a Ph.D. in Nutrition and a minimum of 3 years in a comparable industry role. DSM is a leading supplier of nutritional ingredients to the Food, Medical Food, Supplement, and Pharmaceutical industries.

The Scientific Leader will be required to interact with a variety of customers including dietary supplements, food and beverage companies, supplement producers, pharmaceutical companies, infant formula companies, government regulators, and key opinion leaders in scientific, food technology, and communication arenas. This individual must be able to function well on cross-functional teams and within a matrixed, international organization.

Full position description here

Assistant/Associate Professor - Community Health Sciences (University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health)

The Division of Community Health Sciences (CHS) in the UIC School of Public Health (UIC-SPH) is an inter-professional, transdisciplinary group of educators, researchers, practitioners, students, and staff dedicated to promoting health equity as a social justice imperative. We focus on the role of fundamental biopsychosocial determinants of health across populations and through the life course, toward improving and sustaining population health and well-being. Our work employs applied public health science and requires mixed methodologies and collaborations with traditional and nontraditional research partners as well as community stakeholders.

Housed within CHS, the UIC Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (CoE-MCH) is funded through the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of HRSA. The Center's vision is to be a leader in the area of maternal and child health (MCH) by building public health capacity, fostering health equity and social justice, and developing leaders across the workforce continuum in order to strengthen individuals, families, and communities, and cultivate a culture of health and well-being for all. Our mission is to provide graduate students with rigorous evidence-informed curricula and programming steeped in social justice and practical experience. We do this in collaboration with MCHB and the IL State Title V program, including its partners, and by engaging with local communities. The CoE-MCH program is designed to develop leaders with vision, creativity, and a commitment to life-long learning and action to improve the health and well-being of women, children, and families including children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN).

CHS and the CoE-MCH invite applications for a tenure-track Assistant or tenured Associate Professor position with a focus on child and/or adolescent health.

Review of applications will begin on June 30, 2020 and continue until the position is filled. Full position description here

ROTATION OPPORTUNITIES

(AGGREGATED HERE SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEARCH THROUGH HUNDREDS OF ARCHIVED EMAILS)

Food Fortification Initiative

The Food Fortification Initiative (FFI) provides technical assistance to partners in multiple countries in how to enrich grains (wheat flour, maize flour, rice) with nutrients to prevent malnutrition. Since its founding by an Emory University professor 17 years ago, FFI has enlisted students to contribute to its vision of "smarter, stronger, healthier people worldwide by improving vitamin and mineral nutrition."

Helena Pachón, Senior Nutrition Scientist at FFI, is open to discussing:

The skills and knowledge you want to strengthen as part of your rotation.

Different data sets and contacts FFI has access to that can be used to formulate a rotation project.

A "win-win" project where the student gets what they want and FFI does as well.

For further information, contact Dr. Helena Pachon at: helena.pachon@emory.edu

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Secondary data from a birth cohort with multiple follow up time points up to age 24 years will be used to explore the association between sugary beverage consumption in infancy and subsequent risk of obesity. The data is on-hand. This rotation would involve longitudinal data analysis and co-authoring a manuscript for publication.

For more information, contact: Dr. Jean Welsh at: jwelsh1@emory.edu

Electronic Health Data Phenotyping

CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity is utilizing electronic records to assess incidence and prevalence of obesity, laboratory follow-ups, co-occurrence of conditions (e.g. NAFLD, Type 2 diabetes, cardiometabolic, influence-like illness) as well as counseling and treatment modalities. Per use of a large Ambulatory Electronic Medical Record (AEMR-US) of non-hospitalized pediatric patient information, conditions that are currently rare in other national surveys, can be further defined using electronic algorithms (phenotypes) and estimates created using these big data sources.

The student could review and document literature (create synthesis review, algorithm manuscript) on:

- Phenotypes (case definitions using big data approaches via electronic health data) for specific pediatric and adult conditions
- Epidemiology studies employing phenotypes
- Analytic methods and designs used for phenotypes though big data approaches

For more information, contact: CAPT Heidi Blanck, PhD at: hcb3@cdc.gov

Surveillance Survey Analysis

CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity captures information on nutrition knowledge, attitudes, practices, and behaviors through a panel survey of Americans (youth aged 11-17; adults; Hispanic adults). In addition, federal nutrition surveillance surveys are available for analyses including BRFSS, NHIS, NHANES, FLASHE, and YRBS or novel approaches such as assessment of social media data related to nutrition topics. Topics available for analysis including:

- Nutrition and physical activity behaviors among cancer survivors as part of the BRFSS
- Assessment of fruit and vegetable intake among Hispanic participants within the BRFSS survey by English or Spanish survey modality Epidemiology studies employing phenotypes
- The student could propose an analysis of nutrition topics per their interest as part of a collaborative project with scientists' approaches

For more information, contact: CAPT Heidi Blanck, PhD at: hcb3@cdc.gov

World Vision Child Nutrition Qualitative Program Evaluation

Advisor: Melissa Young and World Vision

Student would lead the analysis for a qualitative program evaluation led by World Vision in Cambodia to examine the program impact pathway for a child nutrition program. There are qualitative interviews with caregivers (participants in program), volunteers implementing study and World Vision staff. There will be a combination of structured questions to assess program fidelity with open ended questions to probe on what worked and what didn't and why. Interviews will be transcribed and translated into English. All work can be done remote. World Vision would like this work completed by end of summer. Time would likely be about 20hrs/week. One of the arms the study was testing out if using mobile phones for counseling/follow up calls would be comparable to in person visits. This is timely given the current COVID situation and WV is hoping to use the lessons learned from this to help guide their strategic planning for the next year. If you are interested or have any questions please let me know!

For more information, contact Dr. Melissa Young at: melissa.young@emory.edu

Rotation Opportunity with Ethun lab at Yerkes National Primate Research Center

Description: A data analysis rotation is available utilizing data from a translational rhesus macaque study conducted at the Yerkes National Primate Research Center. This NICHD-supported study investigated the effects of maternal diet and stressor exposure on lactational programming of infant somatic growth and metabolic health outcomes. No prior experience in statistical analysis required. One rotation opportunity available for Fall 2020.

Contact: Dr. Kelly Ethun, DVM, PhD (Kelly.f.ethun@emory.edu)

Teaching Assistant Opportunity

Dr. Jean Welsh will be teaching the undergraduate Nutrition and Chronic Disease Course this fall and would like to know if any of you might be interested in serving as the TA. Here's a brief description: This course will explore current evidence relating to diet, nutrition, and the food environment to promoting health and preventing disease. The focus will be on digestive health, obesity type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, bone health, and cancer. Students will learn about diet and related factors that increase or decrease risk of these conditions, evaluate evidence, and compare intervention strategies. Please let her know if this might be of interest to you.

There is as an added incentive to the additional teaching experience, there is a stipend for TA'ing this course.

For more information, contact: Dr. Jean Welsh at: jwelsh1@emory.edu

GRAD SCHOOL HACKS

Work and Study Efficiency in Difficult Times (Emory University Scholar Blogs) Read here

WFH: New Challenges & New Opportunities (Emory University Scholar Blogs)

Read here

How to defend a PhD remotely (Nature, 03/30/2020)

Read here

Finding motivation while working from home as a PhD student during the coronavirus pandemic (Nature, 04/28/2020)

Read here

Working from home because of COVID-19? Here are 10 ways to spend your time (Science Magazine, 03/16/2020)

Read here

Strategies for re-engaging with your research -- when and if you're ready (InsiderHigherEd, 04/16/2020) Read here

ONLINE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES (FREE)

The Metropolitan Opera (New York)

Nightly Opera Stream

More information here

The Royal Opera House

More information here

Anastasia here

Museo del Prado

The Museum's collections

More information here

Louvre Museum

Virtual Tours

More information here

The British Museum

More information here

How to explore the British Museum from home

More information here

National Gallery of Art

Virtual Exhibitions

More information here

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Aryeh D. Stein, Ph.D., MPH

Professor, Hubert Department of Global Health and Department of Epidemiology, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University. Co-chair, Institutional Review Board

Dr. Stein's academic path to his current position

I studied nutrition at the undergraduate level in London (England), and then served for two years as a VSO (the British analog of Peace Corps) volunteer as a nutritionist for one of the highland provinces in Papua New Guinea. I coordinated nutrition screening, school nutrition education, and related activities, and assisted in the development of a multi-sectoral rural development program grant that was funded by the Australian Development Bank. While doing this work, I had become interested in epidemiology as a tool to quantify health status and the impact of programs, and applied to graduate school from there, planning to do my doctoral dissertation work on the evaluation of this program. That didn't happen (it's a long story), and in the end I pursued a dissertation related to the dietary patterns and CVD risk factors of a panel of preschool children living in northern Manhattan, New York City. Following graduation from Columbia University with my PhD I spent a few months in Amsterdam, working with a colleague on analyses of data that he had collected on women whose mothers were exposed to the Dutch Famine of 1944-45. I joined Emory in 1998 after 5 years as junior faculty at Michigan State University.

What is your particular area of research and how did you become interested in it?

I consider myself to be a life-course epidemiologist. I have always been interested in health rather than illness, and hence was not interested in a career in medicine. Nutrition seemed to be a natural fit –food is a universal need, and likely to be a strong cause of variations in health status. Epidemiology is the quantitative discipline that underpins public health. The synthesis of the two (nutritional epidemiology) has been my focus. I have spent time studying diet in young children, the impact of acute starvation among pregnant women on the health of their offspring, the impact of nutrition supplementation in the context of widespread chronic undernutrition on cardiometabolic disease, and most recently, the development of adult human capital through the analysis of multiple birth cohort studies from 5 lower or middle-income countries

What did you enjoy the most about your graduate school experience?

Graduate school is an opportunity to explore new ideas, to learn in depth, to generate new knowledge. I came to graduate school after two years of field work, and hence was ready to take my experience and integrate it with rigorous academic training.

Do you have any professional development advice for NHS students?

- Don't over-specialize at the PhD level –there will be ample opportunity to do that afterwards.
- Network. Be flexible and open to opportunities.
- Tackle questions that are interesting, and make sure that the answer is useful regardless of what it
 is. A well-designed study that produces a null result is just as important as one that produces a
 'significant p-value'. A poorly-designed study is worthless regardless of the answer.
- Find projects that are some combination of interesting, challenging, novel, and important. The more boxes you can tick, the better.
- Don't work alone. Science is a team sport. Find people who are smarter than you are (they really
 do exist), and learn from them.

Describe any challenging and exciting parts of your current position?

- Funding is always a challenge.
- Seeing a result emerge from an analysis is exciting. I have used a sculpting analogy frequently.
 Starting from an amorphous rock, the sculptor has to believe that there is something in there, and by chipping away carefully an image emerges. Getting ideas to be presented clearly in a manuscript is a similar process.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I read. I take local hikes. Because I travel so much for work (at least when there is no pandemic), being home and doing not a whole lot becomes important.

Describe any potential rotation opportunities?

The best projects come out from conversations about the literature and the issues of our time. I am always happy to discuss your research ideas-there are lots of data sets out there that can be mined.

PHOTOS FROM THE SEMESTER



Moriah Bellissimo's dissertation defense (January 31, 2020).



Siran He's dissertation defense (February 19, 2020).



María José Ramírez-Luzuriaga's dissertation defense (February 21, 2020).



Joseph Roberts was awarded the McCormick Award and 2020 Outstanding Student Mentor Award at the NHS 2020 Recruitment Reception.



Congratulations to the 5th year class of new PhDs!



Join our Alumni and Student Group on LinkedIn!

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