WELCOME CHRISTOFFER JOHANSEN

Christoffer Johansen is Head of the Unit of Survivorship at the Danish Cancer Society Research Center. Since 2011 Christoffer has also been affiliated with the University of Hamburg, Germany as adjunct professor on the Faculty of Medicine. Beginning March 2012, Christoffer will be spending a 6 month sabbatical in the Departments of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and Psychiatry. His main research area is psychological and social factors in relation to cancer, electromagnetic fields and cancer, and genetic factors in relation to brain tumors. He is hosted by Jonine Bernstein and is currently collaborating with Sara Olson and Jonine on the international GLOUGENE Studies identifying genetic risk factors associated with gliomas. Christoffer received his MD in 1986, his PhD in psychosocial cancer epidemiology in 1994, and his degree of Doctor of Medical Sciences in environmental cancer epidemiology in 2004 at the University of Copenhagen. Since 1989 he has been involved in several research and development projects integrating register based and clinical data into a research agenda, which focus on how psychological and social factors are associated with cancer in terms of risk, prognosis, and intervention. During his tenure here at MSKCC, he is interested in forging research collaborations in survivorship and will also be working with us on our training grant application. Please join us in welcoming Christoffer!

COLONOSCOPY & THE NATIONAL POLYP STUDY

Ann Zauber, in collaboration with Dr. Sidney J. Winawer, Weiji Shi and other investigators from the National Polyp Study provided compelling evidence that colonoscopy not only reduces the incidence of colorectal cancer but also reduces mortality from this disease. As the lead article in The New England Journal of Medicine on February 23rd, this multi-center study reported long-term follow-up (median 16 years) of 2,602 patients who received a polypecytoma via colonoscopy from 1980-1990. The investigators compared the number of colorectal cancer deaths in the group of patients that had adenomas removed with the expected number in the general population using data from the Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program and an internal control group of patients that had non-adenomatous polyps removed. Results found a 53% reduction in colorectal cancer mortality rate for those participants who had adenomas removed, compared to the mortality rate from colorectal cancer in the general population. Using general population estimates, the expected number of colorectal cancer deaths was 25.4 for the study population size; Zauber et al. observed 12 deaths from colorectal cancer among patients with adenomas removed. Furthermore, in the first 10 years after initial colonoscopy, colorectal cancer mortality rates were comparable in the adenoma patient group and the benign polyp group. The New York Times featured these results in a front-page article on February 23rd followed by an editorial on February 25th and the February 23rd issue of NEJM provided an editorial in response to the study.

PUBLICATION

Jaya Satagopan co-edited the book “Statistical Human Genetics: Methods and Protocols” (published by Humana Press of Springer; ISBN 978-1-61779-554-1) with Professors Robert Elston and Shuying Sun of Case Western Reserve University. In this book, expert researchers in the field describe statistical methods for the analysis of human genetics data and provide relevant computer programs in the detail necessary to make the methods more easily accessible to the beginner. This book contains 30 chapters addressing various contemporary topics on statistical methods for human genetics. Our very own Venkatraman Seshan is a contributing author of this book. The year 2012 marks the 80th birthday of Professor Elston, and Jaya is enormously honored to collaborate with him on this book and witness his continued enthusiasm and dedication for statistical genetics research.
IVR FOR WEBCORE

The Web Survey Core (WEBCORE), directed by Ethan Basch, is a Core Facility, which creates online surveys for data capture. After a year of exploration, setup, and testing by Marwan Shouery, Sr. Programmer, WEBCORE is pleased to offer Interactive Voice Response (IVR) as an option for its clients. Marwan was able to set up a special server connected to phone lines which can make/receive calls from patients based on a predefined schedule. Data are saved and secured in the WEBCORE database. One of the first MSKCC studies to use the WEBCORE IVR option is a protocol developed by Larissa Temple, Antonia Bennett, and Ethan Basch, A Comparison of the Feasibility and Psychometric Properties of Paper vs. Web vs. Automated Telephone Administration of Patient Reported Outcome Surveys. This is an initial proof-of-concept and will assess patient-reported outcomes (PROs) after colorectal cancer therapy.

STAFF UPDATES

* Chaya Moskowitz: PhD promoted to Associate Attending Biostatistician
* Eve Burstein promoted to Research Study Assistant II
* Lauren Rogak, MA promoted to Clinical Research Coordinator

NEW STAFF

Nicolò Maria Passoni
Research Fellow
Nicolò is a fellow from the Department of Urology, University Vita Salute San Raffaele, Milan, Italy. Dr. Passoni is joining Dr Vickers’ team for 12 months.

Elizabeth Rivera
Research Secretary, Health Outcomes Group
Elizabeth has her BA in Psychology from Manhattan College. Before coming to MSKCC, Elizabeth volunteered at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and worked at the Health Services and the Residence Life Departments at Manhattan College.

BAIC MIXER

The Center for Health Policy and Outcomes and the Head and Neck Service sponsored a breakfast this February for employees on the 14th floor of BAIC. This event gave members of our team the opportunity to get to know employees across other departments who share the floor and to create a greater sense of community.