VENKATRAMAN SESHAN ELECTED AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION FELLOW

Venkatraman Seshan, Ph.D. has been elected a Fellow of the American Statistical Association (ASA). Election as an ASA Fellow is one of the highest professional achievements in statistics. Each year no more than one-third of one percent of the current ASA membership can be elected a Fellow. Candidates for ASA Fellowship are nominated by their peers. The selection process evaluates the candidate’s contributions in the areas of research, teaching and service to the statistics profession through mentoring, consulting, leadership. The awards ceremony for the newly selected fellows will take place at the ASA annual meeting in Florida this August.

Dr. Seshan first joined the faculty at Memorial Sloan-Kettering in 1993. He is currently the Director of the Biostatistics Computer-Intensive Support Services for the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Dr. Seshan’s research focuses on developing methods for the analysis of high throughput data, specifically from genomic profiling such as DNA copy number and methylation arrays. He is an author or co-author on over 180 published papers and serves as Associate Editor of Statistics and Probability Letters.

We congratulate Dr. Seshan on this momentous achievement and well-deserved recognition of his continuing contributions to the field of statistics.

WELCOME ALLISON SNYDERMAN!
NEW FACULTY IN HEALTH OUTCOMES RESEARCH GROUP

Allison Snyderman, Ph.D. has joined the Health Outcomes Research Group as an Assistant Attending Outcomes Research Scientist. Dr. Snyderman comes to MSKCC from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health where she received her Ph.D. in Health Services Research and served as a postdoctoral fellow. During her studies, Dr. Snyderman contributed to numerous projects including the notable Michigan Keystone ICU project, investigating mortality rates and length of stay among hospitals implementing an intervention to reduce hospital infections. Further, Dr. Snyderman consulted with the Maryland Hospital Association on projects related to quality and safety for Maryland hospitals. Her primary research interests center around patient safety, quality of care, and vulnerable populations. Dr. Snyderman aims to further these concepts at MSKCC and is excited about collaborating with others to bring about policy change within the cancer field.

In June, Dr. Snyderman will be presenting a poster: “How Long Can ICUs Maintain Zero Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infections?” at the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting in Seattle, Washington.

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CRG CORNER

The Clinical Research Database (CRDB) runs on three platforms including CRDB Client, CRDB Web and CRDBi. The Computer Resource Group (CRG) introduced new forms including the Specimen Check Out Group (CRDB) including CRDB Client, CRDB Web and CRDBi which runs on three platforms.

CRDBi is the web client platform of the Clinical Research Database. The release version is currently CRDBi 1.24.1.

PRESENTATIONS

- Ann Zauber gave two presentations during the Colorectal Cancer Screening session at Digestive Disease Week, May 7-10, 2011 in Chicago, Illinois.

- “Detection of Proximal Adenomas by Colonoscopy Following Flexible Sigmoidoscopy Depends on the Colonoscopy Referent Algorithm: Analysis of the UK Flexible Sigmoidoscopy Study Algorithm Applied to the US National Colonoscopy Study”; Ann G. Zauber, Timothy B. Church, Glenn Mills, Margaret Mandelson, John J. Allen, Paul A. Jordan, Andrew D. Feld, Julie M. Ruckel, Sharon Bavyaga-Miller, Deborah Kuk, Irene Orlov, Noah D. Kauff, Michael J. O’Brien, Sidney J. Winawer

- Meier Hsu presented at one of the contributed paper sessions during the Society for Clinical Trials 32nd Annual Meeting, May 15-18, 2011 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

- “Effect of Celecoxib on Adenoma Count using a Zero-inflated Poisson (ZIP) Model with Random Effects”; Hsu M, Zauber AG, Gönen M, Bertagnolli M.

- Not quite taking "tea to China., Andrew Vickers was asked to lecture on acupuncture research in Chengdu, China, in Sichuan province. The lecture was entitled "The Acupuncture Trialists' Collaboration: individual patient data meta-analysis from high quality trials of acupuncture for chronic pain" and presented results from a study coordinated by Dr. Vickers, in which data from close to 18,000 randomized patients were collated and analyzed.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please join us in welcoming our new staff!

- Kara Fraga, Administrative Manager
  Kara holds her MPA in Health Policy and Management from NYU Wagner. She has worked in the healthcare field for 13 years, the past three at MSKCC. Kara loves to travel--Spain being a favorite destination. Kara joins the Administrative team and is job sharing with Shireen Lewis.

- Prusha Patel, Research Study Assistant
  Prusha holds her MPH in Health Policy and Management. Prior to coming to MSKCC, she worked at the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging and volunteered at the Visiting Nurse Services of New York. Prusha will be working with investigators and colleagues in the Epidemiology and Health Outcomes services.

- Ling Y. Chen, Data Analyst II
  Ling holds her MPH from Columbia University where she studied epidemiology and global health. Prior to this position, she worked as a Research Study Assistant within the Gastroenterology service on clinical trials in pancreatic cancers. Ling works with Andrew Vickers and his research team.

Staff Promotions

- Julie Ruckel, Research Project Manager, Epidemiology
- Chelsea Schneider, Research Study Assistant II, Epidemiology

Farewell to staff

- Dawn Lavene will be pursuing her nursing degree at the University of Pennsylvania in July.
- Tracy Layne will be leaving the department in July to pursue a Ph.D. in Epidemiology at Yale.
- Joshua Mirkin will be leaving the department in July to pursue his M.D. at SUNY Downstate.
- Himali Patel, after her years of service to the lab and department, has chosen to leave MSKCC to spend more time with her family and beautiful son born last year. We wish her and her family all the best.
- Caroline Savage will be pursuing her doctoral degree in Health Outcomes Research and Policy at the University of Washington in the fall.
- Erica Schubert will be leaving the department to pursue her doctoral degree in Psychology at the Ferkau Graduate School of Psychology at Yeshiva University.

PUBLICATIONS

- Clonality: an R package for testing clonal relatedness of two tumors from the same patient based on their genomic profiles
  Irina Ostrovnaya, Venkatraman E. Seshan, Adam Olshen, and Colin B. Begg published a paper in Bioinformatics in which they describe their recently-released R package called ‘Clonality’. It implements methodology for testing whether tumors from the same patient are clonal or independent based on their mutational profiles. There are functions for such testing for the data consisting of either selected markers or genome-wide copy number arrays. The package also contains functionality to produce various graphical summaries of the data. The Clonality package may be freely downloaded from the Bioconductor website.

- Assessment of rare BRCA1 and BRCA2 variants of unknown significance using hierarchical modeling
  Marinela Capanu, Ph.D., and Colin Begg, Ph.D., co-authored a paper in Genetic Epidemiology which applies hierarchical modeling to the case-control WECARE Study to identify rare deleterious BRCA1/BRCA2 missense mutations. Among the total of 181 rare missense variants identified in the data, there were 6 new missense variants detected by the model as plausibly deleterious and deserving of further investigation. MSKCC co-investigators include Jonine Bernstein, Ph.D., and Xiaolin Liang, MA.