MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING CANCER CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS

# B.E.A.C.H.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWSLETTER
February 2025 | VOLUME 17, ISSUE 1

## BIOSTATISTICS SEMINARS

- ❖February 19, 2025 — **Ying Wei, Columbia**
- ❖March 5, 2025 — **Corwin Zigler Brown**
- ❖March 12, 2025 — **Mithat Gonen, MSKCC**
- ❖April 2, 2025 — **Marinela Capanu, MSKCC**
- ❖April 9, 2025 — **Audrey Mauguen, MSKCC**

## HALVORSEN CENTER FOR COMPUTATIONAL ONCOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES

- ❖May 20, 2025 — **Fernanda Pinheiro, Human Technopole Palazzo Italia**
- ❖June 17, 2025 — **Peter Park, Harvard**

## EPIDEMIOLOGY SERVICE MEETINGS

- ❖March 17, 2025 — **Cao Yin, Washington University**
- ❖March 31, 2025 — **Irene Orlow, MSKCC**
- ❖April 14, 2025 — **Matthew Baus, MSKCC**
- ❖April 28, 2025 — **Xiang Shu, MSKCC**

## POPULATION SCIENCES RESEARCH PROGRAM SEMINAR SERIES

- ❖March 18, 2025 — **Robin Yabroff, ACS**
- ❖April 15, 2025 — **Jennifer Temel, Harvard**

## HEALTH OUTCOMES RESEARCH GROUP SEMINARS

- ❖February 27, 2025 — **Alexis Chidi, MSKCC**
- ❖March 20, 2025 — **Allison Lipitz-Snyderman, MSKCC**
- ❖April 17, 2025 — Michael Leapman, **MSKCC**




## A NEW DAWN FOR SEAN

**Sean Devlin** grew up in Maine, trained at Syracuse University and Columbia University, received his PhD from University of Washington in 2011 and started as an Assistant Attending at MSK in 2011. Throughout his time here he worked with investigators from the Division of Hematologic Malignancies in the Department of Medicine, and he deserves full credit for our bourgeoning collaboration with them. He played a major role in the development of CAR T cell therapies and the use of microbiome in bone marrow transplant research. In his own line of research, he developed specialized trial designs for cellular therapies, he worked on developing surrogate endpoints, and he built methods to better develop and evaluate biomarkers. He also co-chaired Research Council. He was one of those rare people who built very good relationships with pretty much everyone, and he will be missed as much for that as for his accomplishments in science. After 4861 days as a colleague, Sean will leave us to go to Vertex Pharmaceuticals in Boston. We hope it is only goodbye and not farewell.

## 2024 SERVICE AWARDS

The department had a lot to celebrate this past year with 30 members achieving milestones. Festivities included: the Holiday Party, a happy hour, MSK's annual 20 year club dinner, a Biostats lunch and a dinner held by the Epi group! Congrats to everyone!


## SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

5 Years

- ❖Georgios Asimomitis
- ❖Mia Austria
- ❖Sarah Bober
- ❖Andriy Derkach
- ❖Michelle Dongel
- ❖Yuval Elhanati
- ❖Michelle Garcia
- ❖Eliyahu Havasov
- ❖Richard Koppenaal
- ❖Stephanie Lobaugh
- ❖Andrew Mcpherson
- ❖Akriti Mishra
- ❖Tara Mohan
- ❖Jeffin Naduparambil
- ❖Cristina Radu
- ❖Nicole Rusk
- ❖Srinivasa Sevilimedu Veeravalli
- ❖Marc Williams

10 Years

- ❖Kay See Tan

15 Years

- ❖Ling Chen
- ❖Malcolm Pike

20 Years

- ❖Jonine Bernstein
- ❖Cynthia Berry
- ❖Katherine Cheung
- ❖Shireen Lewis
- ❖Xiaolin Liang

25 Years

- ❖Mithat Gonen
- ❖Katherine Panageas
- ❖Andrew Vickers

35 Years

- ❖Colin Begg

## GRANT SUCCESS

**Helena Furberg** and James Flory received a 2025 PSRP Developmental Funds Award for their project titled "Determining the impact of antidiabetic drugs on body composition trajectories in hyperglycemic pancreatic cancer patients".

**Talya Salz**, **Chaya Moskowitz**, and Danielle Friedman received a 2025 PSRP Developmental Funds Award for their project titled "Engaging adolescent and young adult cancer survivors in preparation for a prospective cohort study".

**Yuelin Li**, Thomas Atkinson, and Jennifer Cracchiolo received a 2025 PSRP Developmental Funds Award for their project titled "Understanding and Refining Large Language Models to Improve Capture of Patient-Reported Outcomes (UNFILTERED)"

## PUBLICATIONS

**Anne Reiner** and colleagues published a paper in JAMA Network Open entitled, "Breast cancer susceptibility gene sequence variations and development of contralateral breast cancer", using data from the WECARE Study. They demonstrated that deleterious variants in breast cancer susceptibility genes were differentially associated with ER-specific contralateral breast cancer (CBC) development. Germline variants can help inform ER- CBC risk estimates which portends a worse prognosis than ER+ CBC.

**Anne Reiner** and colleagues published a paper in Blood Advances entitled, "Anxiety and depression in patients with histiocytic neoplasms and their associated clinical features." They found approximately 1 in 3 patients with histiocytic neoplasms (HN) met criteria for anxiety or depression and 1 in 7 met criteria for moderate or severe anxiety or depression. These rates were stable over a twelve-month trajectory and correlated with financial burden, symptom severity, and health-related quality of life, suggesting that for patients with HN, offering education regarding depression and anxiety, increasing access to psychotherapeutic and integrative medicine interventions, and maximizing efforts to manage disease symptomatology are warranted.

**Charlie White**, **Audrey Mauguen**, and colleagues published a paper in European Journal of Surgical Oncology (EJSO) entitled "PET-CT-based host metabolic (PETMet) features are associated with pathologic response in gastroesophageal adenocarcinoma." They proposed an imaging-based patient metabolic profiling as a novel approach to predict patient-specific response to cancer therapy. Using decision trees, their analysis shows that metabolic profiles can be defined from PET metabolic features, which predict pathologic response better than clinical factors alone on the assessed patients. Once validated, this non-invasive profiling approach could be incorporated into precision medicine assessments to improve patient prognosis accuracy.

## PROMOTIONS

- **Katherine Cheung** promoted to Sr Project Manager
- **Yuan Chen** promoted to Assistant Attending
- **Teng Fei** promoted to Assistant Attending
- **Kathryn Graz** promoted to Sr. Research Technician
- **Hannah Kalvin** promoted to Research Biostatistician II
- **Jasme Lee** promoted to Research Biostatistician II
- **Cristina Radu** promoted to Lead, Research Administrative Assistant

## GHANAIAN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS GO TO SPACE

**Samuel Ahuno** had the incredible opportunity in December 2024 to introduce over 70 Ghanaian grade school students & teachers to the wonders of virtual reality. They launched themselves from the classroom in Accra, Ghana, breaking earth's escape velocity to explore galaxies and planets like true astronauts. Seeing their excitement and curiosity reminded Samuel of the power of technology to inspire future generations. They also explored the use of open access & free Large Language Models (LLM) like the Meta AI embedded in WhatsApp & ChatGPT in their education.

The "When I grow up" section revealed that a lot of students want to be doctors and engineers. While their odds may be significantly lower, Samuel made them aware that it is possible but will take lots of work. He also shared with them the work of a scientist like himself and many of you in the TRI – I institutes.

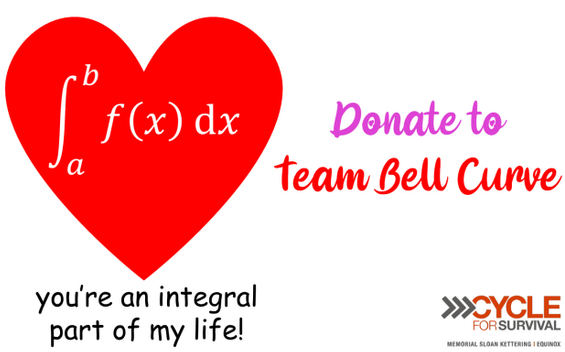
Thank you to all staff and students of St. Maurice RC JHS for participating!

## BOOK CLUB

The next Book Club book will be announced soon, the next meeting is likely to be at the beginning of April. If you would like to join, contact **Elizabeth Kantor**.

## CYCLE FOR SURVIVAL – TEAM BELL CURVE

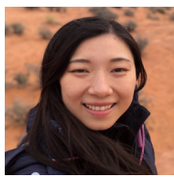
Epi-Bio's Team Bell Curve is preparing for another year of Cycle for Survival! Please consider supporting the team through their Valentine's fundraiser or directly on their team page here.



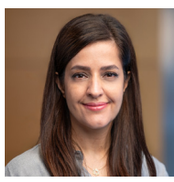
## NEW STAFF

**Lasai Barreñada Taleb, Graduate Research Assistant**
Lasai joins the epidemiology and biostatistics team for a 4-month research visit to collaborate with Andrew Vickers. He is currently a 3rd year PhD student at KU Leuven, Belgium. His research focus is on prediction models development and evaluation, and more specifically in model calibration. Lasai is a music, film, and hiking enthusiast who is thrilled to visit the big apple for the first time.

**Jessica Kretli Zanetti, Senior Research Technician**
Jessica joined the department as a member of the Molecular Epidemiology Lab. She has graduated from The City College of New York with a Master of Science in Biomedical Engineering. Jessica has extensive experience in nanotechnology, with a focus on developing carbon nanosensors as diagnostic tools for biomedical applications. She is very excited to bring her knowledge to contribute to ongoing research and collaborate with the team.



**Ying Liang, Postdoctoral Research Scholar**
Ying has joined the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics as a postdoctoral research scholar with Xiang Shu. Her research focuses on genetic epidemiology, particularly in breast and gastric cancer. She earned her PhD in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from the University of Hong Kong. Prior to her PhD, she had six years of clinical research experience in biostatistics and project management at CRO, a medical device company in the Asia-Pacific region.



**Farimah Shamsi, Postdoctoral Research Associate**
Farimah has joined the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics as a postdoctoral research associate under the mentorship of Chaya Moskowitz and Andriy Derkach. Her research focuses on developing novel statistical methods for data integration across various datasets. In particular, she advances methodologies for more complex settings that account for heterogeneity between studies and the presence of large numbers of biomarkers, utilizing latent class models. She earned her PhD in Biostatistics from Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran, Iran. Before her postdoctoral position, she spent four years as an assistant professor of Biostatistics in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology at Yazd University of Medical Sciences, where she gained extensive experience in teaching and clinical research.

**Mathieu Yergo, Research Technician**
Mathieu joined the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in December. He graduated with a bachelor's in biology from Reed College, and his senior thesis was on neurogenesis of Xenopus laevis (an acquatic African frog). Mathieu will contribute to multidisciplinary research in the Molecular Epidemiology Lab working with Dr. Orlow and her team. Mathieu is looking forward to learning more about our research and is very excited to join the MSK team.

## PERSONAL MILESTONES

**Aimee Calder** gave birth to Bennett Jalen Calder on October 25, 2024.

## JOIN THE NEWSLETTER

Interested in joining the Epi Bio newsletter? Contact **Joey Kanik** for more information!