NEW GRANTS: CONGRATULATIONS!

Ronglai Shen, PhD received a two-year award funded by the Starr Cancer Consortium: “An Integrative Paradigm for the Discovery of Novel Tumor Subtypes and Associated Cancer Genes (I3-A137)”. The goal of the study is to develop a novel statistical framework for cancer subtype analysis across multiple genomic data types. This study is motivated by Dr. Shen’s involvement in the NCI/NHGRI sponsored Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) project. The pilot phase of TCGA aims to catalog the entire spectrum of genomic changes associated with three cancer types: breast cancer (g lobla stoma multiforme, GBM), lung cancer (squamous cell carcinoma of the lung), and ovarian cancer. As a result, TCGA is producing a large amount of multidimensional data sets including somatic mutations, DNA copy number, DNA methylation, gene expression, and microRNA expression, generating a great need for statistical and bioinformatic tools for effective integrative data analysis such as the ones proposed in Dr. Shen’s Starr award. Another critical component of the Starr award is the close collaboration with cancer biologist at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Using hepatocellular carcinoma as a case study, the project team at MSKCC will collaborate with Dr. Scott Powers and Dr. Scott Lowe to functionally validate candidate cancer genes identified from the integrative analysis, using rapid and cost-effective in vivo RNAi and cDNA screening platforms.

Jaya M. Satagopan, PhD was awarded a four-year R01 grant from the NCI: “Study of Exposures, Behaviors, and Biomarkers in Cancer Epidemiology”. Cancer epidemiology studies often measure exposure and behavior factors using survey instruments or serum specimens, and examine variant alleles from multiple genes to identify risk factors for diseases. The long-term objectives of this project are to investigate penalized likelihood methods for analyzing such data, to develop parsimonious methods for evaluating interactions, and to develop optimal study designs for follow-up research. Other MSKCC investigators involved in this project include: Larry Engel, Qin Zhou, Susan Oliveria and Allan Halpern.

Sara H. Olson, PhD was awarded a two-year R03 grant from the NCI: “Allergies and pancreatic cancer: A pooled analysis in PANCA”. This project will provide more detailed and precise information on the consistently noted association between allergies and reduced risk of pancreatic cancer by combining existing data from 10 studies in the Pancreatic Cancer Case-Control Consortium (PANCA).

CANCER INTERVENTION AND SURVEILLANCE MODELING NETWORK

Ann Zauber’s CISNET grant has four new publications as part of Iris Lansdorp-Vogelaar’s thesis. Ann served on the thesis defense committee at ErasmusMC in Rotterdam in April.

- At what costs will screening with CT colonography be competitive? A cost-effectiveness approach. (Int J Cancer, Mar 2009)
- Individualizing colonoscopy screening by sex and race. (Gastrointest Endosc. Jul 2009)
- Rising chemotherapy costs make colorectal cancer screening cost-saving. (J Natl Cancer Inst, In press)
Fellow,

year as a Clinical fellow. Urology Outcomes after completing her first Shrujal Baxi Service in the Department of Surgery. Urology.

towards an MPH; he will be returning School of Public Health working Gennie will be leaving MSK in August to pursue a Master’s in Health Policy Epidemiology Service. \[\text{Jennifer Brooks}\]

Ray Baser is promoted to Research Biostatistician in the Biostatistics Service.

Sujata Patil is the new Departmental representative on the Junior Faculty Council. Her appointment is for the next two years.

Renee Lichtenstein Renee recently graduated from John Jay College of Criminal Justice with a BA in Forensic Psychology. She is now a full-time RSA working in the Epidemiology Service.

Gennie Snow Gennie will be leaving MSK in August to pursue a Master’s in Health Policy at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Will Lowrance is at the Harvard School of Public Health working towards an MPH; he will be returning in August to begin clinical rotations in Urology. David Yee is on the Urology Service in the Department of Surgery. Shrujal Baxi has returned to Health Outcomes after completing her first year as a Clinical fellow. Urology fellow, Andrew Feifer, will be working with Elena Elkin for the upcoming year. Shari Goldfarb and Thomas Atkinson are continuing their work with Ethan Basch.

Mia Gaudet We are bidding farewell to Mia Gaudet who will be leaving the department at the end of August to pursue research opportunities at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She will continue to collaborate with her colleagues in the Department and in the Clinical Genetics Service.

CONFERENCE AND PRESENTATIONS

ASCO Annual Meeting May 29th – June 2nd in Orlando, Florida

The 2009 ASCO Annual Meeting provided an exemplary forum for the dissemination and discussion of cutting-edge scientific and educational developments in oncology with a focus on personalized cancer care.

Education Session:

- Elena Elkin chaired a session on concepts and methods for assessing costs and cost-effectiveness of new cancer technologies.

Poster Session:

- “Locally Advanced Prostate Cancer: A Population-Based Study of Treatment Patterns and Predictors”; Lowrance WT, Eastham JA, Jacks LM, Yee DS, Scardino PT, Elkin EB.

AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting June 28-30th in Chicago, Illinois


Clinical Research Professionals Week July 20-24th, MSKCC

- Amy Hamilton presented “Economic and Social Impacts of Disease and Treatment in Older Patients Receiving Chemotherapy for Colorectal Cancer.”; Hamilton AA, Minges KE, Patel S, Weiss ES, Temple L, Elkin EB.
- Tracy Layne presented “Studying Cancer in Minorities – A Look at the Numbers”; Olson S, Layne T, Simon J, Ludwig E, O’Reilly E, Allen P, Kurtz RC.

Other Presentations

- Gennie Snow presented “The Business Case for Hospital-Based Colonoscopy Patient Navigator Programs” at the Citywide Colon Cancer Control Coalition (CS) Summit, jointly sponsored by the NYC Department of Health and MSK, on June 11th.
- Andrew Vickers was invited to speak at St Thomas’s Hospital in London, England, on June 22nd regarding the use of a single PSA to risk-stratify prostate cancer screening.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME NEW STAFF!

Jennifer Brooks Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Epidemiology Service

Jennifer started a two-year post doc in the Epidemiology Service this past June. She received a PhD in Epidemiology from NYU and holds an MS in Nutrition from the University of Toronto. Her doctoral thesis entitled, “Promoter Methylation of Tumor Suppressor Genes Detected in Serum for the Early Detection of Breast Cancer”, was conducted using the NYU Women’s Health Study under the co-direction of Drs. Roy Shore and Anne Zeleniuch-Jacquotte. Jennifer’s focus at MSKCC will be primarily studies of radiation and genetic susceptibility in the WECARE Study and using MRI enhancement to predict breast cancer risk.

Roberto Martin Associate Application Analyst, Computer Resource Group

Before joining the CRG team in July, Roberto worked as a Junior Software Developer at UBS Bank. He holds an MS from Columbia University in Electrical Engineering with a focus in Computer Science. In the CRG, Roberto will be working with developers to design the CRDBi, the newest platform for the Clinical Research Database, and participate in the maintenance of the existing system.