



## MSKCC NEWS

### EFFORT REPORTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The U.S. government requires MSKCC to certify time and effort for all employees supported by federal funds. This certification will now be conducted quarterly by someone with “first hand knowledge” of the sponsored effort, such as a principal investigator, lab head, supervisor, or directly by the individual whose time is being certified. Please see the documentation from the [information sessions](#) or contact Roxana Damian, Bradley Cohen, or Brendan Phalan if you have any questions.

Thank you to all those ensuring our Department is compliant!

### WWW.MSKCC.ORG

Designs are underway for a new and improved MSKCC web site. This past June, our Departmental Computer Committee met with representatives from the design consulting firm to discuss the future of the Epidemiology and Biostatistics web site. Currently, we are expanding web content such as staff CVs, [B.E.A.C.H. Newsletters](#) and the Annual Report. New ideas for design work are focused on Publication listings, Seminar postings and Project pages. The new designs for the MSKCC web site are expected to be completed by Summer 2010 (unofficially!).

Staff members are encouraged to keep their web page content up-to-date and request a summary of web traffic to their pages. All requests may be made to Rick Church at the CRG Helpline.

## IN THE NEWS

### Medicare, Start the Bidding

New York Times - 06/04/2009

Op-Ed: **Peter B. Bach** discusses how a competitive bidding system could help the government spend less for high-quality healthcare.

MSKCC was ranked **#2** under ‘[Best Cancer Hospitals](#)’ in the United States as reported by U.S. News and World Report.



### DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Colin Begg, PhD

### EDITORS

Lindsay Jacks, MS  
Sharon Bayuga, MPH

### CONTRIBUTORS

Rick Church, MPH  
Brendan Phalan | Gennie Snow

## 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: brain cancer (glioblastoma 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 biologists 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.



Ronglai Shen, PhD

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 PANC4](#)”. 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 ([PANC4](#)).

## 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](#))
- ❖ A novel hypothesis on the sensitivity of the fecal occult blood test: Results of a joint analysis of 3 randomized controlled trials. ([Cancer. Jun 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)

**WEBCORE Online Research Tools** are used to create online surveys to assist any MSKCC research study. WEBCORE is managed through **Ethan Basch's** team. If you are interested, try out the **DEMO** or contact Laura Sit or Marwan Shouery for more information.

## MORE STAFF NEWS

### COUNCILS

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

### RECENT PROMOTIONS

**Ray Baser** was promoted to Research Biostatistician in the Biostatistics Service.

### EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

#### **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.

### FELLOWS ON THE MOVE

**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.

### GOODBYE & GOODLUCK!

#### **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.

## CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

### [ASCO Annual Meeting](#)

May 29<sup>th</sup> – June 2<sup>nd</sup> 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:**

❖ "Synchronous and metachronous bilateral breast cancer: Are the risks greater in women with a history of radiation for Hodgkin lymphoma?"; **Elkin EB**, Gonzales AR, **Ishill NM**, Klem ML, Hodgson D, Ng AK, Marks LB, Weidhaas J, Freedman GM, Miller RC, Yahalom J.

❖ "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**.

❖ "Prognostic factors for overall survival with sunitinib as first-line therapy in patients with metastatic renal cell carcinoma (mRCC)"; **Patil S**, Figlin RA, Hutson TE, Michaelson MD, Négrier S, Kim ST, Huang X, Motzer RJ.

### [AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting](#)

June 28-30<sup>th</sup> in Chicago, Illinois

❖ **Elena Elkin** presented "Disparities in the Availability & Use of Mammography"; **Snow JG**, **Ishill NM**, **Bach PB**, **Panageas KS**, Wang F, Schrag D.

### [Clinical Research Professionals Week](#)

July 20-24<sup>th</sup>, 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.

❖ **Himali Patel** presented "Chemotherapy-induced changes to cognition and DNA in breast cancer survivors"; Morris L, **Patel H**, Ahles T, Correa D, **Orlow I**, Traina T, Li Y.

#### **Other Presentations**

❖ **Gennie Snow** presented "The Business Case for Hospital-Based Colonoscopy Patient Navigator Programs" at the Citywide Colon Cancer Control Coalition (C5) Summit, jointly sponsored by the NYC Department of Health and MSK, on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

❖ **Andrew Vickers** was invited to speak at St Thomas's Hospital in London, England, on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.