



MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT

Howard T. Thaler, PhD, reached his **35th Anniversary** at MSKCC on October 14th. When Dr. Thaler joined the Biostatistics Laboratory of The Sloan-Kettering Institute (Memorial Hospital and SKI were not yet MSKCC), the entire staff comprised three PhD statisticians, one MS statistician, one MS computer scientist, one administrator, and one secretary. Back in 1974, they would send punch cards containing data and programs by messenger to the computing center at NYU, and had printed output delivered by messenger a few times per week. Times sure have changed!

Congratulations Howard!

JOURNAL CLUB

The **Genomic Data Analysis Journal Club** (GDAJC) has been revived and plans to meet once a month, tentatively on **Fridays at noon**. Irina Ostrovnaya and Ronglai Shen will be co-organizing the new series. The scope of the discussions will include any papers of interest on the topic of statistical genomics and high-throughput data analysis, as well as current research of the presenters in these areas. All are welcome to join and present.

Please note that the Club is always looking for volunteer speakers. Please contact Irina or Ronglai if you would like to present in the future.

INVITED SEMINAR

Andrew Vickers, PhD, visited the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in late November to give a seminar on decision curve analysis.

Physician-in-Chief e-Newsletter

New & Noteworthy! Starting July 2009, Dr. Robert Witten began an e-Newsletter discussing his views on current issues affecting the Memorial Hospital community. You can share your thoughts or suggestions on any of the topics. Check it out!



DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Colin Begg, PhD

EDITORS

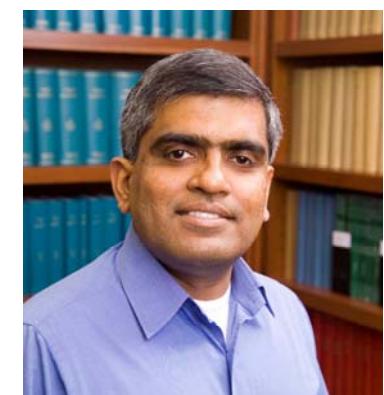
Lindsay Jacks, MS
Sharon Bayuga, MPH

CONTRIBUTORS

Rick Church, MPH | Brendan Phalan | Angel Cronin, MS

NEW FACULTY: WELCOME BACK VENKAT!

Venkatraman E. Seshan, PhD, (a.k.a. "Venkat") returned to our Department on October 19th to pursue the role of Director of Biostatistics Computer-Intensive Support Services. Before his return, Dr. Seshan was previously a Professor in the Department of Biostatistics at Columbia University, where he was also Director of Biostatistics at the Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Seshan received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Indian Statistical Institute in Calcutta and his PhD from Stanford University, California. Upon graduation, he joined the Department of Statistics at the University of Arizona in Tucson. After spending a year and a half there, he moved to the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at MSKCC.



Venkatraman E. Seshan, PhD

Dr. Seshan's role as Director involves support for genomics and other computer-intensive activities, computing support for the Biostatistics Service, as well as collaborative research with clinical investigators and a methodological resource for junior biostatisticians. We are thrilled to have Dr. Seshan back in our Department and look forward to learning from his expertise.

NEW GRANTS

Talya Salz, PhD, was awarded an R03 grant (CA144682) from the NCI to evaluate the need for post-treatment (survivorship) information and preferences for care plans among colorectal cancer survivors, cancer specialists, and primary care physicians. This 2-year project was recently approved by IRB (Colorectal Cancer Survivors' Needs and Preferences for Survivorship Information, IRB #09-133) and will recruit patients from MSKCC and Queens Cancer Center. Colleagues involved in this study are **Talya Salz** (PI), **Elena Elkin** (Co-Investigator), **Chaya Moskowitz** (Co-Investigator), and **Tracy Layne** (RPC).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- ❖ [Nodal Staging Score: A Tool to Assess Adequate Staging of Node-Negative Colon Cancer](#)
Mithat Gönen, Deborah Schrag, and Martin R. Weiser
Journal of Clinical Oncology. Published November 9th, 2009.
- ❖ [Bayesian Modeling of ChIP-chip Data Through a High-order Ising Model](#)
Mo, Q. and Liang, F
Biometrics. In press.

WEB SITE UPDATE: Resources for Professionals

A new page titled [Resources for Professionals](#) was added to our Departmental web site. This new page is highlighted on the [Epi & Bio homepage](#), just below the Letter from the Chairman. The homepage link directs web site traffic to the new page which features our Newsletter, Faculty Profiles, Research Projects, and Seminars. Resources for Professionals is targeted to faculty candidates and other prospective staff who are interested in key areas of our Department's work. It is also notable that several additional projects are now posted on the [Epidemiology Projects page](#). Updates to our web site will continue – Stay tuned!

WELCOME NEW STAFF!

Shari Damast

Radiation Oncology Resident, Health Outcomes

Shari will be working as part of Ethan Basch's team conducting research on symptoms in patients receiving radiation treatment.

Joshua Mirkin

Data Assistant, Health Outcomes

Josh will be supporting the research needs of Elena Elkin and Peter Bach. He recently graduated from Dartmouth College with a B.A. in Biology and Economics.

Lauren Rogak

RSA II, Health Outcomes

Lauren will be coordinating various multi-institutional clinical trials inherited with Ethan Basch's new appointment as CALGB chair of the Quality of Life and Health Outcomes subcommittee. She holds a M.A. in Clinical Psychology from the New School for Social Research.

Meghan Woods

RPC, Epidemiology Service

Meghan will be working with Jonine Bernstein and The Women's Environmental Cancer and Radiation Epidemiology (WECARE) Study. She comes to us from the NCI Cancer Information Service (CIS) at MSKCC.

RECENT PROMOTIONS

Meier Hsu was promoted to Research Biostatistician in the Biostatistics Service.

Junting Zheng was promoted to Research Biostatistician in the Biostatistics Service.

GOODBYE & GOOD LUCK

Nicole Ishill

We are wishing Nicole Ishill good luck as she furthers her academic career in the DrPH program in Biostatistics at Columbia University. Nicole has been with the Biostatistics Service for over 5 years and we appreciate all her hard work and dedication over the years. All the best!

Lindsay Jacks

We are bidding farewell to Lindsay Jacks who will be leaving the Department at the end of December to pursue a Biostatistics position at Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We wish Lindsay the best of luck as she pursues this new path in her career.

NIH NEWS

• **Changes to NIH Application Forms**

NIH has released new application instructions and forms for both [paper-based PHS 398 applications](#) and [electronic SF 424 \(R&R\) applications](#). The new application instructions and forms must be used for applications intended for due dates on or after **January 25th, 2010**. The full announcement can be found [here](#).

• **NIH Issues Final Rule on Multiple PIs**

As part of the [Roadmap for Medical Research](#), the NIH has issued a [final rule](#) (effective December 10th, 2009) formally revising the definition of Principal Investigator to mean "one or more individuals designated by the grantee in the grant application ... who is or are responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the project." The [Multiple PI option](#) requires additional administrative requirements, including development of a leadership plan. **Marinela Capanu, PhD**, and **Colin Begg, PhD**, elected to use this model for their awarded R01 grant (CA131010, "Estimating Cancer Risks of Rare Genetic Variants").

**Please contact Brendan Phalan, Bradley Cohen, or Roxana Damian for specific information and assistance with the two above NIH changes.

GREEN INITIATIVE: *Computer Shutdown Campaign*

Two new tools are available as part of our Departmental campaign to keep our office computers in the shutdown mode during non-work hours. Several of our staff use their PCs remotely and these tools may be very useful.

1. **MSKCC Shutdown Scheduler** found on the Start menu at:
START > WORKSTATION HELP > MSKCC SHUTDOWN SCHEDULER V1.1
2. **PC Wake-UP Page** found at the web site:
<http://pcwakeup/wolpage/webform1.aspx>

It is important to note that the Shutdown Scheduler can hold multiple scheduled tasks that will ensure the computer is shutdown even after automatic reboots for necessary maintenance and software upgrades. For help with the automatic shutdown or remote wake-up of your PC, please contact Rick Church at the CRG Helpline 646-735-8180.

DID YOU KNOW?: MSKCC Library Edition

❖ **Track Your Article's Influence with Scopus**

The [MSKCC Library](#) offers several resources to track an article's influence, including [Scopus](#), a comprehensive database including over 14,000 scientific, technical, and medical journals. Find out how often your articles have been cited by using Scopus's Citation Tracker. You can also sort search results using the "Cited By" column, which allows you to see some of the most influential papers on a particular topic.

You can learn more about using Scopus in the MSKCC Library's new class called "**One Good Article Leads to Another**". All of the Library resources are available from anywhere with access to the internet as long as you login to the Library Web site using your MSKCC username and Employee ID.

❖ **Redesigned PubMed**

On October 28th, [PubMed](#) launched a redesign of their website. Don't hesitate to ask a librarian if you have any questions about the new interface or if you need help with a literature search.

Email the MSKCC Librarians at AskLibrarian@mskcc.org or give them a call at 212-639-7439.



DEPARTMENTAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Holiday Party that will be taking place on **Thursday, December 10th, 2009**, from 5:30 - 8:30pm on the Top Floor of the Scholar's Residence ([google map](#)).

Please join us for an evening of food, festivities and fun! If you haven't already done so, please RSVP to the E-vite sent out on November 10th, so that the Party Planning Committee can get an accurate head count.