



BOW STREET BULLETIN

News and Ideas from the
Harvard Center for Population and
Development Studies

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Training in social determinants of health goes global

In 2008, the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Commission on Social Determinants of Health (SDH) postulated that the extreme differences in health currently existing within and between countries are linked to degrees of social disadvantage. In an effort to better understand these disparities—and subsequently champion policy change—the INDEPTH Training & Research Centres of Excellence (INTREC) pilot project was founded.

By the WHO’s definition, “social determinants of health” means “the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, all of which are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels.” The Harvard Pop Center, long dedicated to advancing awareness of SDH, was a natural fit to join INTREC’s international consortium of university-based and research network centers, and to take a strong role in its initial project, entitled “Addressing Inequities and Social Determinants of Health in Africa and Asia.” The INTREC partners include Umeå Center for Global Health Research, Umeå University in Sweden; Institute for Public Health, Heidelberg University in Germany; Center for Health Service Management, Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia; Centre for Social Science and Global Health, Amsterdam University, the Netherlands; INDEPTH (*The International Network for the Demographic Evaluation of Populations and Their Health researchers*); and the Harvard Pop Center.

The three-year project, launched in January 2012 and funded by the European Union, is designed to train junior researchers

from countries in Asia and Africa on social determinants of health, with the long-term goal of translating their research into published



Participants at the June 2014 INTREC training at Harvard enjoy a cruise on Boston Harbor

works that can ultimately influence policy.

“We saw this as a golden opportunity to expand the social determinants of health training we’ve been conducting domestically for years to researchers in other parts of the world. It was a privilege to work closely with this very interdisciplinary cohort of scholars and also with our partners,” says Pop Center Director Lisa Berkman.

Developing the training curriculum

The INTREC project was offered to junior public health researchers who hailed from some of the countries participating in the INDEPTH network, such as Indonesia, India, Viet Nam, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa. All participants had a minimum of a master’s degree in a health-related field and most were already conducting their own research studies

involving community health data gathered at human demographic surveillance sites. The purpose of the INTREC training was to add a new focus on social determinants of health to their work.

Professors Peter Byass and Jon Kinsman at the Umeå Center for Global Health Research have served as the principal investigators and overall project coordinators. The Pop Center’s role has been to develop and execute the training curriculum. To accomplish this task, in fall 2012 the Center hired Anna Mirny, Ed.D, as INTREC Director of Education. In the ensuing months, she designed the educational framework consisting of five “blocks” into which the curriculum would be organized and taught. INTREC faculty from the six partner organizations provided input and developed teaching materials.

“In the planning, it was first important to establish what these researchers needed to

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BOW STREET BULLETIN

THE HARVARD CENTER FOR
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News briefs

Below is a sampling of the recent achievements of Pop Center faculty, fellows, affiliates, and staff. Congratulations to all!

Moving on

■ In August, Bell Fellow **Dan Corsi** joined the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute as research scientist.

■ This September, **Courtney Cogburn**, RWJF Health & Society Scholar, begins her new position as an assistant professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work.

■ **Christina Roberto**, RWJF Health & Society Scholar, joins the Harvard School of Public Health in September, as an assistant professor.

■ Pop Center postdoctoral fellow **Erika Sabbath** departs for the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work where she begins as an assistant professor. She will maintain a visiting scientist appointment here at the Center.

New appointments

■ **Lisa Berkman**, Pop Center director, was named the new president of the Association of Population Centers at the Population Association of America annual meeting in May. Her two-year term began immediately.

New funding

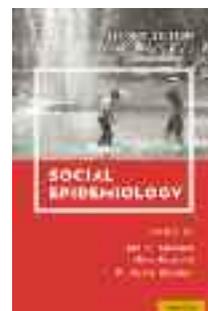
■ “Welfare Effects of Balancing the Federal Social Security and Health Care Budgets,” an R01 project funded by the National Institute of Health. (PI: **David Canning**, Richard Saltonstall Professor of Population Sciences, and Professor of Economics and International Health, HSPH)

■ “Falling Behind: The Black-White Wealth Gap in Life Course and Intergenerational Perspective,” an Emerging Scholars Research Grant funded by the Institute of Poverty Research. (PI: **Alexandra Killewald**, assistant professor of sociology, Harvard and Pop Center faculty member).

■ “Quantifying economic and health effects of psychosocial workplace exposures,” funded by the CDC/NIOSH – Public Health Service (PI: **Erika Sabbath**, assistant professor, Boston College Graduate School of Social Work)

Publications

■ The second edition of the *Social Epidemiology* textbook hit the shelves this summer. Edited by **Lisa Berkman** and Pop Center faculty members **Ichiro Kawachi** and **Maria Glymour**, this updated version of the original landmark book captures what has happened in the Social Epi field over the past decade and includes four new chapters on the role policies play in shaping health.



■ Harvard Kennedy School professor and Pop Center faculty member **Rohini Pande** had an op-ed published in the August 8 *New York Times* called, “The Youngest Are Hungriest.” In it, Pande discussed why Indian children are shorter than youngsters in other developing countries.

■ Harvard economist and Pop Center faculty member **David Cutler** co-authored a July 2014 *Social Science and Medicine* paper entitled, “When does education matter? The protective effect of education for cohorts graduating in bad times.” It argued that the losses associated with poor labor market outcomes—obesity, lower income, lower life satisfaction—are substantially less severe for more educated individuals.

■ **Mark Schuster**, chief of general pediatrics and vice-chair for health policy, Boston Children's Hospital, and Pop Center faculty member, has authored a *Perspective* paper in the August 7 *New England Journal of Medicine*. Entitled “Time Off to Care for a Sick Child — Why Family-Leave Policies Matter,” the article vehemently argues for and cites numerous studies supporting the benefits of paid sick leave policies.

Training in social determinants of health goes global, *continued from page 1*

learn in order to better understand social determinants of health,” explains Mirny. “First there had to be the theoretical exposure, then training in qualitative and quantitative methods. Next would come hands-on work with their own projects, including data analysis. Finally, results from their studies would be shared with the scientific community, the stakeholders, and the wider public in their countries.



Joke Haafkens, professor at the University of Amsterdam, mentors Uddhavi Chaven from India at the Harvard workshop, June 2014

Building understanding, block by block

The training officially launched in October 2013 with the first block, an online course offering a graduate-level introduction to the current social determinants of health framework and methods. The eight sessions were taught by Harvard School of Public Health and Pop Center faculty. By the end, 30 researchers from nine countries had logged in to hear topics such as education, SES and health; social policy and evaluation; and social networks and exclusion. The students completed homework assignments and received written feedback from the teachers online.

The participants who completed the online course were then invited to attend a regional training (block two) either in Indonesia in April or Ghana in May 2014. These workshops provided more in-depth instruction in quantitative and qualitative methods. Faculty from the Institute for Public Health at Heidelberg University taught the quantitative methods, and the instructors from Umeå Center for Global Health Research and Centre for Social Science and Global Health, Amsterdam University led topics on qualitative methods. Twenty-three INTREC students completed block two.

The goal of the next block was for participants to begin developing specific SDH-focused case studies using their own data from their countries. To accomplish this, the Harvard Pop Center hosted a data analysis and writing capacity workshop in Cambridge in June 2014. Spots were offered to INDEPTH researchers representing Ghana, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, Papua New Guinea, South Africa and Vietnam. Over the course of a busy week, 12 participants applied what they had learned to their own studies. Pop Center faculty and postdoctoral fellows were on hand to provide one-on-one consultation. Some of the research topics included exploring HIV infection in Tanzania; high obesity in Indonesia; and smoking prevalence in India.

Block four, currently running, involves providing the researchers with tools to more effectively build bridges between research and policy. An online lecture by Professor Laksono Trisnantoro of Gadjadara University in Indonesia that focuses on presentation techniques to policymakers has been launched. More resources have been posted on the INTREC course site to help researchers develop their communication skills to better present their findings to a wider audience.



Students and faculty at the INTREC workshop in June (See full names on our website)

The final block, which is scheduled for October 2014, will be an online forum for researchers and policymakers. The INTREC-trained researchers will be presenting their results and posting case studies. They will also have the opportunity to discuss their work with policymakers in their home countries.

Positive evaluations

For Mirny, who has been attending the workshops and engaging with participants, the sense of accomplishment and appreciation is palpable. “I’ve seen how excited these researchers are to be trained by the leading SDH specialists,” says Mirny. “Evaluations from both the online courses and face-to-face workshops have been very positive. Judging by their own reflections, they really see themselves as learning and progressing.”

As word of the INTREC project got out, it became evident that training in social determinants of health was in very high demand. Says Mirny, “We had researchers from non-INTREC countries such as Ethiopia and Papua New Guinea ask if they could take the online course and we were able to accommodate them.”

While the project won’t conclude for another few months—and there is no predicting how many publishable research papers will result or if funding will be renewed—there are already positive signs the experience has had a positive impact on the participants.

“It was amazing to observe students from so many different countries all coming together and engaging in collaborative learning, despite varying cultural and personal backgrounds. As soon as the first online course started they were bonded by their mutual interests in social determinants of health and commitment to using this framework in their research on the ground,” explains Mirny.

In addition to providing world-class training, the INTREC project has created a foundation for the participants to exchange information that they wouldn’t otherwise have had. Says Mirny, “At the beginning of the data workshop at Harvard, Lisa Berkman expressed hope that the group would not only become a source of information and support for one another, but become long-term colleagues and friends—and I’m sure that goal will be met.” ■

The Pop Center celebrates 50 years

To commemorate the Harvard Pop Center's 50th Anniversary, three special events were held in late April. On April 28, an open house and reception at the Center's Bow Street address kicked off the celebrations. Highlights included poster presentations by postdoctoral fellows spotlighting their current research, reunions between past and current faculty, staff, and

fellows, and international teas and treats.

A formal dinner followed, honoring three of the Center's remarkable contributors: Former Director **Lincoln Chen**; founder Roger Revelle's daughter and heir to his commitment to public health **Mary Revelle Paci**; and Pop Center Senior Visiting Fellow **Sissela Bok**.

The next morning, over one hundred

students, postdoctoral researchers, professors, and members of the general public assembled for a symposium entitled "Reimagining Societies in the Face of Demographic Change." Distinguished speakers reflected on the current demographic challenges facing societies and communities, and shed light onto the Center's initiatives in response to these challenges. ■

For additional coverage of these events, including more photos, remembrances from past fellows and researchers, videos of symposium speakers and panelists, and links to media coverage of the event, please visit our website at www.hsph.harvard.edu/cpds

Open House



Dan Branton and Selena Ortiz



Jessica Williams (left) and Margaret Gough



Gathering at the Open House



David Canning (left) and Ian Salas



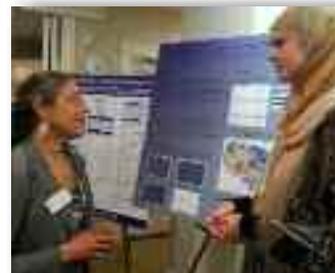
Jocelyn Finlay (left) and Hiram Beltran-Sanchez



International treats



Panka Deo (left) and Michael Reich



Alix Smullin (left) and Laura Yasaitis

50th Symposium



Sir Michael Marmot, University College London



Presenters (from left) Julio Frenk, Lisa Berkman, Mary Waters, Amitabh Chandra, Subu Subramanian, David Canning, Jack Rowe, Sir Michael Marmot, and Babatunde Osotimehin



Scene from the symposium



Lisa Berkman, Harvard Pop Center

Harvard panelists (from left) Subu Subramanian, Mary Waters, and Amitabh Chandra



Babatunde Osotimehin, United Nations



Symposium audience



Jack Rowe, Columbia University

Celebratory Dinner



Lincoln Chen and Lisa Berkman



Sissela Bok



Kayla Small, Nicole Goguen, Laura Price, Claudette Agustin, and Meghan Perdue



Sir Michael Marmot, Valerie and Jack Rowe



Alan M. Garber (welcome remarks)



50th dinner celebration



Stella Chen and Sasha Scolnik-Brower (Harvard students)



Mary Revelle Paci



Clemens Noelke, Wafaie Fawzi, and Dan Corsi



Julio Frenk, Sissela and Derek Bok



Mary Revelle Paci (second from left) and her family



Lincoln Chen (at podium)



Judy Singer, Meghan Perdue, Courtney Cogburn and David Canning



Lisa Berkman

Upcoming Fall 2014 Events

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION HEALTH & SOCIETY SCHOLARS SEMINARS

Harvard School of Public Health, 677 Huntington Ave, Kresge 708, Boston 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM (unless noted by an *)

These Thursday sessions are open to faculty, research scientists, and postdoctoral fellows.

DATE	TITLES & SEMINAR LEADERS
September 11	Introducing the RWJF Health & Society Scholars Angie Boyce, RWJF Health & Society Scholar, Harvard, cohort 12 Rourke O'Brien, RWJF Health & Society Scholar, Harvard, cohort 12 Colleen Reid, RWJF Health & Society Scholar, Harvard, cohort 12 <i>*Note: This event will take place at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, 9 Bow Street, Cambridge</i>
October 2	Lead Exposure, Socioeconomic Status, and the Propagation of Cognitive Disparities Werner Troesken, Professor, Economics and History, University of Pittsburgh
October 16	Early Environments, Inflammation, and the Perpetuation of Health Disparities Within and Across Generations Thom McDade, Martin J. and Patricia Koldyke Outstanding Teaching Professor, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University
October 30	Historical Reflections on Stress Measurement Techniques in Social Epidemiology Aaron Mauck, Lecturer on the History of Science, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University
November 13	Title TBD Norman Daniels, Mary B. Saltonstall Professor of Population Ethics and Professor of Ethics and Population Health, Department of Global Health and Population, Harvard School of Public Health <i>*Note: This event will take place at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, 9 Bow Street, Cambridge</i>
December 4	Public Health and Social Justice: Should We Use Stigma as Public Health Policy Tool? Erika Blacksher, Assistant Professor, Department of Bioethics and Humanities, University of Washington

POP CENTER SEMINARS

Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, 9 Bow Street, Cambridge, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

These Monday sessions are open to everyone: faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral fellows and students.

DATE	SEMINAR LEADERS (see www.hsph.harvard.edu/cpds for seminar titles)
September 29	Jim Smith, Distinguished Chair in Labor Markets and Demographic Studies, RAND Corporation
October 20	Pamela Herd, Professor of Public Affairs and Sociology, LaFollette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison
November 17	David Lam, Professor and Chair, Dept. of Economics, and Research Professor, Population Studies Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
December 8	Janina Galler, Senior Scientist, the Judge Baker Children's Center and Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School

Introducing the Pop Center's Incoming Researchers



Angie Boyce recently received her doctorate in Science & Technology Studies from Cornell University, where she investigated historical and current instances of the development of govern-

ment standards and technologies for regulating food safety and nutrition. She has held internships at the CDC and the FDA. As a RWJF Health & Society Scholar, Boyce will conduct a cross-case analysis of major public health emergencies, examining historical and contemporary debates about the infrastructure of the U.S. public health system.



Philipp Hessel received his PhD from the London School of Economics, where he completed a dissertation examining how exposure to macro-economic shocks during

different and potentially sensitive lifecourse periods affects health at later life. His research combines demography, public health and gerontology, and employs cross-national data from Europe and the U.S. As a Bell Fellow, Hessel will look at the role of social protection programs in mitigating the health effects of recessions.



Germana Leyna, a physician and a lecturer in epidemiology at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences in Tanzania, has previously collaborated with HSPH through the

Harvard-Tanzania Partnership. She holds a medical degree from the University of Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania) and a doctoral degree in nutritional epidemiology from the University of Oslo. She is active in the Dar es Sakaan Urban Cohort Study, a Tanzanian urban surveillance site dedicated to the study of non-communicable diseases. As a Spiegelman Fellow, Leyna will focus on how urban migration in low-income countries influences risk factors for NCDs such as obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.



Cathal McCrory is a research fellow at Trinity College Dublin working on the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) project. In this role, he is examining SES variation in mental

health and well-being among the 50+ population in Ireland, and exploring the pathways, processes and mechanisms through which socially mediated risk factors come to influence health over the lifecourse. He holds a PhD in psychology from Queens College Belfast. As a Pop Center visiting scientist, McCrory will collaborate with Harvard researchers who are working on other longitudinal aging studies such as HAALSI, ELSA and LASI.



Sanjay Mohanty joins us as a visiting scientist for a year from the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, India, where he is Professor in the Department of

Fertility Studies. Mohanty's research interests include the economics of aging, health financing, and the nexus of poverty, inequality and human development. He is active in the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI), a pioneering study undertaken as a collaborative effort of Harvard School of Public Health, IIPS, and University of Southern California. While here, Mohanty will explore the linkages between demographic change and economic inequality in India. He holds a PhD in population sciences and a master's in economics.



Rourke O'Brien is a sociologist who studies the connections between public policy, economic behavior, and population health. He holds a PhD in Sociology and Social Policy from Princeton

University, where he authored a dissertation on the social and structural determinants of self-reported disability. O'Brien previously served as a senior policy advisor at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. As a RWJF Health & Society Scholar, he will continue his research on how population health is impacted by household finance, taxation, and social policy.



Colleen Reid's research focuses on the health effects of climate change. She received her PhD in environmental health from the University of California Berkeley, where her work included

an epidemiological analysis of exposure to air pollution from northern California wildfires. She also has created a national neighborhood-level spatial map of vulnerability to extreme heat. As a RWJF Health & Society Scholar, Reid will apply causal inference epidemiology to environmental hazards, to better understand population vulnerability vis-à-vis climate hazards.



Molly Rosenberg is an epidemiologist who studies how social, structural, and economic factors influence sexual health outcomes. She holds a PhD from the University North Carolina

at Chapel Hill. Her dissertation examined how the sexual health outcomes of rural South African adolescents are linked to the adolescents' association with two very different places: school and alcohol outlets. As a Bell Fellow, Rosenberg will explore the influence of child support grants upon fertility patterns, and the community-level determinants of HIV infection and sexual risk in South Africa. ■

**Applications now
being accepted for
the next cohort
of Bell Fellows.
Visit www.hsph.harvard.edu/cpds
for details.**

Lack of subsidized contraception impacts families in Philippines

J.M. Ian Salas, a David E. Bell Research Fellow at the Pop Center, is an applied microeconomist with research interests in the fields of development, labor, demography, and health. Salas' recent research has focused on the impact of subsidized contraception on fertility in the Philippines. A paper resulting from that study received the prestigious 2014 Dorothy S. Thomas Award from the Population Association of America.

Population management has long held academic interest for Salas, but the topic—and the country wherein he has focused most of his current work—is also very personal for him. Salas was born and raised in the Philippines, and saw the population double in size (from 50 million to 100 million) over his lifetime. The country is currently the 12th most populated country in the world.

Growing up in Olongapo City, he witnessed firsthand the negative effects of high population growth as his country experienced congestion and depressed economic development. “The poverty I saw among many big families was always in the back of my mind as I grew up,” says Salas. “As I learned more about the factors that hindered the development of countries, I became more interested in the population aspect, and I sought to find out what influences the number of children that couples decide to have, or end up having.”

“There is a great deal of supposition around why the Philippines has bigger families compared to its neighboring countries,” explains Salas, referring to the presumed impact of Catholic beliefs and biased gender roles. “I wanted to go beyond the speculation and flesh out the facts.”

When contraception becomes less available—and more expensive

Salas chose to focus his research on the effects of the gradual phase-out of USAID's (United States Agency for International Development) contraceptive donations to the Philippines from 2004 to 2008. Up until the point of the phase-out, more than two-thirds of the country's contraceptive users relied on these free contraceptive supplies for their family planning (the rest bought their supplies from pharmacies and private clinics).



This phase-out was part of a worldwide USAID plan to encourage individual country ownership of family planning programs, but the reaction of the Philippine national government ran counter to that plan. The

government declined to fill the contraceptive shortage due to the then-president's ties to the Catholic Church, which opposes the use of modern methods of contraception. This government inaction created a situation in which Salas was able to assess the impact of a lack of government support for family planning.

For his investigation, Salas reviewed the distribution of free contraceptive supplies to each of the country's 82 provinces from the years 2000 through 2008. He also tracked gaps in quarterly product availability due to shipping delays, lack of inventory, and inconsistent delivery sizes. He then linked this distribution data to survey data on women's birth histories.

Disadvantaged groups most affected

Salas found that women who were poor or low-educated were more likely to get pregnant and have unplanned births after the supplies of free contraceptives dropped unexpectedly in the provinces in which they lived. These findings were in line with results from research in other developing nations with weak family planning programs.

Salas attributes the heavy impact on disadvantaged groups to their inability to fully compensate for the loss of free contraceptives. Explains Salas, “When there is little money coming in, the focus is on ensuring day-to-day survival; other concerns get pushed way down in the order of things to think about and work on. Many important things, like family-planning, may end up not being addressed at all.”

Policy implications

There are several lessons that emerged from Salas' study that he hopes will guide the crafting of more effective policies.

Key among them is the need for protected allocation of subsidized contraception in the government budget. In the face of limited resources, programs must also ensure that low-income couples are the priority for receiving subsidized contraception. And even when subsidized contraception is available, governments need to create and maintain an effective supply chain and support system that anticipates and meets client needs.

In a welcome recent development, the Philippines is implementing a reproductive health law this year that puts in place these recommendations. Salas is hopeful that this renewed commitment to family planning will promote his country's sustainable development and help disadvantaged groups more effectively plan their childbearing. ■



Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies

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