



MPH Connections



Spring & Fall 2020 Issue

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Editor: Marielle Millevoi

Co-editor: Dr. Gopal Sankaran and Dr. Stacie Metz



Meet MPH Program Director: Dr. Stacie Metz

As of July 1, 2020, Stacie Metz, PhD, MPH, MSW, MA assumed the MPH Program Director and Graduate Coordinator position in the Department of Health. We thank newly retired Drs. Lynn Carson and Dee Bill for their incredible leadership and service to the students, community, and program. Dr. Metz earned her PhD in Public Health Studies – Health Services Research from Saint Louis University in 2006 where she worked as a program evaluator, data manager, and analyst for a variety of chronic disease and community health projects. Since that time, she has taught classes in both the undergraduate, graduate public health programs and in the graduate social work program. On behalf of the program, she invites you to reach out if your agency may benefit from hosting an MPH intern or you are interested in sharing your experience as a class guest speaker or as a panelist at a virtual student professional development meet-up. We hope you will enjoy reading the stellar accomplishments of our WCU MPH community.

Meet the MPH Student Advisory Board



MPH SAB President: Danielle DiGiorgio

Danielle is a second year MPH student in the

Community Health Track. She is on the path to
graduate in 2022 (3-year track). Aside from
academics, she works full time as a Drug and
Alcohol Prevention Specialist in Chester

County. When she isn't occupied
with school or work, she enjoys staying active,
whether it be playing sports, hiking, or hanging
out at the beach.

MPH SAB Vice President: Sinja Sharma

Sinja is a second semester Community
Health student in the MPH program, on
path to graduate in May 2022. Sinja
currently dedicates her time as a
volunteer at the Chester County Health
Department where she uses her Public
Health skills as a contact tracer for COVID19. When she isn't occupied with school or
work, she enjoys reading and being
outdoors, especially if it involves hiking,
traveling, or participating in adventure
sports!



Meet the MPH Student Advisory Board



MPH SAB Secretary: Doris Swarn
Doris is a second year Health Care
Management student in the MPH
program, on the path to graduate in
2021. Aside from academics, she works
full time as a Health and Safety
Coordinator. When she isn't occupied
with school or work, she enjoys staying
active and loves to volunteer, cook, and
sew!

MPH SAB CH Track Rep: Kena Patel
Kena is from Ahmedabad, India and
completed her bachelor's degree in
Dentistry from India in 2018. Kena is a
second year MPH student on the
Community Health track, on path to
graduate in December of 2021. She
currently works as a graduate assistant
for Dr. Neha Sunger and Dr. Lorenzo Cena
in the Department of Health and looks
forward to utilizing her MPH degree for
the betterment of the community. In her
free time, she enjoys travelling and
participating in outdoor activities.



MPH SAB Social Outreach Manager: Victoria Pauline

Victoria is a second year MPH student in the Community Health track and she is on path to graduate in May 2021. She is currently working as a Graduate Research Assistant in the College of Health Sciences at WCU on various global health research projects. Aside from academics and her involvement with research, she also works as a parttime nanny. When she isn't occupied with school or work, she enjoys staying active, reading, and cooking.



MPH Announcements:

• Checkout MPH SAB social media to stay upto-date with the latest info regarding events and professional development opportunities!





Social Media Accounts
Instagram: wcumph
Facebook: Master of Public Health Program –
West Chester University (@WCUmph)

Student Achievements

Congratulations To Our 2020 GSA Award Recipients

This the very first year where graduate coordinators have partnered with the Graduate Student Association to acknowledge excellence by our graduate students. Program faculty nominate and choose one student to acknowledge in one of three categories of Excellence: In the Field, In Scholarship and Creative Activity, and In Leadership, Service and/or Advocacy. Only two students per program can be acknowledged each year. We are honored to present the two GSA Awards for the year 2020.



GSA Award in Scholarly and/or Creative Activities **Ashley Schafer**

Ashley Schafer is a dedicated environmental and public health professional who took great initiative to design and successfully implement a full-scale research project. Her research is on understanding the impact of PFAS chemical compounds on human health and the manuscript is almost ready for submission to the Journal of Environmental Health. On behalf of the MPH program, we commend Ashley on her professionalism, research expertise, and scholarly contribution to the field.

Student Achievements

GSA Award in Leadership, Service, and/or Advocacy Dr. Amrit Baral

Amrit Baral is an outstanding collaborative leader and team player in his service to the MPH program as both the program's Graduate Assistant and the President of the MPH Student Advisory Board. His commitment to program improvement even resulted in the creation of the virtual professional development student series. The MPH program is incredibly fortunate to work with someone holding such a unique blend of talents and a drive to pursue improved health for vulnerable populations in the epidemiology profession.





Shannon Fyalkowski Awarded the Helen P. Cleary Scholarship

Shannon Fyalkowski, MPH-Community Health Track, was awarded the Helen P. Cleary Scholarship for the Spring 2021 Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES®) examination by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC) and the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE). The Helen P. Cleary Scholarship honors Dr. Cleary who was instrumental in establishing NCHEC in 1989 and received the very first CHES® credential. The scholarship provides financial support for students enrolled in a health education related degree program to take the national Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES®) examination.

Highlights From the November 19th Community Advisory Board Virtual Meet-Up

The first community advisory board meeting was co-hosted by program director Stacie Metz and community partner Chrissie Dziembowski eliciting feedback on portions of our strategic plan and curriculum. We welcome new Community Advisory Board Members including:

- Kayode Bey, MPH, Director of Imaging Services, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- Ashley Cifarelli, MPH, Administrative Assistant, Radiation Oncology, Penn Medicine, University of Pennsylvania Health System
- Katie Kucz, MPH, Prevention Coordinator, Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol
- Deborah Lander, PhD, MA, Senior Regulatory Risk Assessor, Chemours Company
- Mandy Mangat, MD, MPH, Chief Clinical Transformation Officer, Navvis Healthcare
- Aerielle Waters, MPH, CHES, Public Health Program Administrator, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Family Health

If you are interested in serving on our Community Advisory Board, please email a letter of interest and current resume/CV to Stacie Metz at smetz@wcupa.com.

Faculty Publications

Davidson P, **Davidson D**, Loesch J, and Limegrover A. The Therapeutic Optimization of the Gut Microbiota in Diabetes Management. American Association of Diabetes Care and Education in Practice, 8:3, 26-31, May 2020.

Edelblute, Heather and Claire Altman. (2020)

"Depression among Mothers with Young
Children—The Role of Family Migration and
Social Networks in Mexico." Journal of Mental
Health, published online 30 March 2020.

(https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2020.1739
237)



Heather Edelblute MPH, PhD

Sankaran, G. (2020). Leveraging Technology for Attaining Sustainable Development Goal 3: The Road Ahead. In Padmini Murthy and Amy Ansehl (Eds.), *Technology and Global Public Health* (pp. 195-202). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Carrieri, M., **Guzzardo, C.***, Farcas, D., & **Cena, L. G.** (2020). Characterization of Silica Exposure during Manufacturing of Artificial Stone Countertops. International journal of environmental research and public health, 17(12). 4489. (*student)

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Faculty Conference Presentations

- Chiarelli-Helminiak, C., & Metz, S. M. (2020). The Era of Human Rights: Integrating Human Rights throughout Curricula. Workshop presented at the 22nd Annual Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education (PANAME) Conference, Wayne, PA, March 6, 2020
- **Edelblute, Heather.** COVID-19 in the Latinx Community: A Population Health Perspective. Latina/o Communities Conference, West Chester University, West Chester, PA, 9/30/20 (Virtual).
- **Edelblute, Heather** and Claire Altman. Breastfeeding, Father Absence, and Social Support: Evidence from Mexico, American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA, 8/11/20 (Virtual)
- Jeff Gillingham*, Heather Edelblute, and Zeinab Baba. Enhancing African Student Well-Being and Success. Poster presentation exhibited during the 1st Annual West Chester University (WCU) Virtual Research and Creative Activity Day, 4/27/20 (Virtual). (*student)
- MacDonald, K.*, & Metz, S. M. (2019). Starting the Conversation on End-of-Life Wishes. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Program, Philadelphia, PA, November 3, 2019. (*student)
- Metz, S. M., & Tyes, B.* (2019). Individual and Community Impact of the Youth Mental Health First Aid Program. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Program, Philadelphia, PA, November 3, 2019. (*student)

Faculty Conference Presentations

- **Sankaran, G.** (2020). COVID-19 pandemic: An opportunity to promote human rights and address gender equality. Oral presentation at the 148th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association (Virtual meeting) on Tuesday, October 27.
- **Sankaran, G.** (2020). Covid-19 pandemic: Public health, politics, policies and outcomes. Oral presentation at the 148th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association (Virtual meeting) on Monday, October 26.
- Hauge, K., Blasetto, J., Buckley, R., O'Brien, C., **Sankaran, G.,** Eglinton, J. (2020). Health coaches/promotores: An asset for enhancing retention and recruitment and facilitating the feedback loop between program participants and providers. Poster presentation at the 148th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association (Virtual meeting) on Monday, October 26.
- Blasetto, J., Buckley, R., Jacobson, J., O'Brien, C., **Sankaran, G**., & Eglinton, J. (2020).

 Sustainability of cardiovascular health programs: Making community programs tick after funding disappears. Oral presentation at the 148th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association (Virtual meeting) on Monday, October 26.
- Borrell, L. N., Kapadia, F., Carroll-Scott, A., **Sankaran, G.**, Fiala, S., Selzer, B. (2020).

 Webinar, Demystifying the American Journal of Public Health: Taking a Look at the Peer Review Process. Organized by the Editorial Board of the American Public Health

 Association and presented to members of the association (Thursday, October 1).
- Carroll-Scott, A., **Sankaran, G.,** Brandt, H. M., Selzer, B. (2020). Webinar, Demystifying the American Journal of Public Health: An Overview for Authors, Reviewers, and APHA Members. Organized by the Editorial Board of the American Public Health Association and presented to members of the association (Wednesday, February 26). Recording available at https://www.apha.org/events-and-meetings/apha-calendar/webinar-events/2020/demystifying-ajph (Access requires APHA membership).



Enhancing African Student Well-Being and Success

Jeff Gillingham, Heather Edelblute, & Zeinab Baba

Background

- African Immigrant students contribute to the diversity of West Chester University (WCU); however, African Immigrant students are oftentimes not treated as a distinct group from African Americans, masking unique issues this group faces.
- Significant research has demonstrated that African immigrant health declines with increasing time in the U.S.
- African immigrant students face a unique set of stressors associated with adapting to life in the US, managing family relationships across borders, and becoming a racial minority.
- Assessing the impediments to African immigrant student success is thus necessary to promote the well-being, retention, and graduation of this vulnerable population.

Objectives

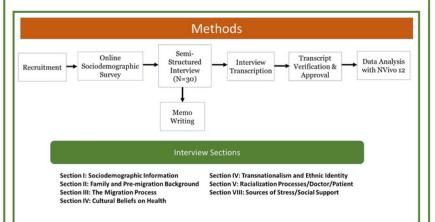
- Enhance African immigrant student adjustment to college, well-being, retention, and graduation by identifying sources of stress for this segment of the WCU student population.
- Assess stressors and cultural factors that influence student well-being and retention in African immigrant students
- Recommend ways WCU can better promote African immigrant student well-being and retention by elucidating social support needs of this population

Data

- 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews
- Inclusion Criteria: Born in sub-Saharan Africa, aged 18+, enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student at WCU, completed ≧1 semester at WCU.



		n
Region		
	East Africa	3
	Central Africa	1
	West Africa	13
	Southern Africa	0
Time living in US		
	< 5 years	1
	5-10 Years	5
	11-15 Years	5
	> 15 Years	4
Send Remittances?		
	Yes	8
	No	7
Working		
	Yes	13
	No	4
Hours Per Week		
	<40 Hours	8
	≥40 Hours	4



Preliminary Results

During the qualitative analysis the various themes began to emerge:

- My main source of stress is the expectation [my parents] put on me. Again, I don't think they intentionally do it, but I think because these people left everything they have to come and make sure you have a better life. —Female, Liberia
- Not a day [goes by where people don't call]. Sometimes before you wake up you already have five, six missed calls. All from home and maybe all those calls are for money.
 Male. Sierra Leone
- I financially support my mom and I'm currently not working. So, I feel bad when she's like "I need something" and sometimes I don't have that much to help her with. It hurts me but there is nothing I can do about it. -Female, Ghana
- I: Why do you think health care providers aren't nice or don't care? R: If you're new in a country and you go to a hospital, what you say to the person that is supposed to treat you, they won't understand what you are trying to say to them. What they say to you, you won't understand it.-Female, Liberia
- 1: How was your experience using those services? R: It was good, a little bit. I just didn't like the fact that I was charged for a visit although I didn't get anything. -Male, Nigeria

WCU Recommendations

- WCU Mental Health Services need to have awareness of stressors this subpopulation faces and serve this group in a culturally competent manner.
- WCU Student Health Services should have no co-pay, have increased African immigrant staff, and require cultural competence training to better serve African students.
- The Center for International Programs and WCU Student Health Services should provide orientation on the health service pay structure, scope of services offered, and where to go in emergency situations.

Development and Testing of a Community-Based Peer-Support Intervention to Mitigate Social Isolation and Stigma of Adolescent Motherhood in Harare, Zimbabwe

















Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago presented at the WCU Faculty Forum on Thursday, November 5th, 2020 on 'Improving the Mental Health of Adolescent Mothers in Zimbabwe". She described a community-based peer-support intervention to mitigate social isolation and stigma of adolescent motherhood which was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in May 2018. As the Principal Investigator, Dr. Tinago collaborates with colleagues from the Organization for Public Health Interventions and Development in Zimbabwe, the University of South Carolina, the University of Zimbabwe, and SpeakUp! in Pennsylvania. The Forum is hosted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the goals of each Forum are to give faculty a platform to share their work with colleagues and to initiate interdisciplinary collaboration.

Faculty Guest Lectures

Sankaran, G. (2020). Disseminate your research outcomes! Invited guest lecture (virtual synchronous) presentation in PH 400: Research Design course at Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado (Friday, February 7).

Sankaran, G. (2020). Health Disparities in LMICs. Invited guest lecture (virtual synchronous) presentation in PH 340: Global Health course at Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado (Thursday, September 17).

Sankaran, G. (2020). U.S. Health Care System, Community Responsive Medicine and COPC. Invited guest lecture (virtual synchronous) presentation in PHYA 542: Research Methods in Health and Disease, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Tuesday, August 25).

Sankaran, G. (2020). Descriptive Epidemiology. Invited guest lecture (virtual synchronous) presentation in PHYA 542: Research Methods in Health and Disease, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Thursday, August 20).

Sankaran, G. (2020). Foundations of Epidemiology. Invited guest lecture (virtual synchronous) presentation in PHYA 542: Research Methods in Health and Disease, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Tuesday, August 18).



Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago PhD, MPH, CHES®

Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago presented at the WCU Faculty Forum on Thursday, November 5th, 2020 on 'Improving the Mental Health of Adolescent Mothers in Zimbabwe". She described a community-based peer-support intervention to mitigate social isolation and stigma of adolescent motherhood which was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in May 2018. As the Principal Investigator, Dr. Tinago collaborates with colleagues from the Organization for Public Health Interventions and Development in Zimbabwe, the University of South Carolina, the University of Zimbabwe, and SpeakUp! in Pennsylvania. The Forum is hosted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the goals of each Forum are to give faculty a platform to share their work with colleagues and to initiate interdisciplinary collaboration.

Dr. Louise Makau-Barasa is serving as the Lead Guest Editor for a Special Collection focusing on prostate cancer in undeserved populations, in the Cancer Control publication of SAGE publishing. The collection will run from September 2020 - September 2021. She has co-editors Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Senegal represented the four main sub-Sahara Africa regions of our focus. Below is an overview of the collection, our topics of interest and a link to the collection. In regards to the collection, little is known about approaches to effectively screen and treat HIV positive men diagnosed with prostate cancer. It is important to understand this topic in light of an aging HIV positive cohort of men of African Descent in the diaspora and Africa, as an underserved population. Potential topics list focused on men of African Descent in the diaspora and Africa, include but are not limited to:Prostate cancer prevention, control. treatment. Understanding disparities related to differences in prostate cancer rates and outcomes. Advances in HIV/ AIDs treatment and prostate cancer.



Dr. Louise Makau-Barasa DrPH, MS, BBA

Dr. Melanie Vile MPH, PhD Dr. Lorenzo Cena PhD

Dr. Melanie Vile: Dr. Vile has been elected Chair to the newly formed Sustainability Advisory Committee for West Goshen Township, West Chester PA. This appointment not only underscores Dr.Vile's passion for being an active voice for sustainability but will elevate both teaching and student research opportunities.

Dr. Vile is also on the West Chester Area, Clean Energy Transition Community Engagement Steering Committee. Dr. Vile also served as a member representing West Goshen Township from August 2020 - present with goals to educate the wider West Chester Area communities about renewable energy with the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. Dr. Vile was also an invited Session Convener and Member of the Scientific Committee for BIOGEOMON, Ninth International Symposium on Ecosystem Behaviour, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia, July 13-17, 2020, Scientific Committee member, and invited speaker; Conference postponed until 2021. (https://biogeomon2020.ut.ee/organisers).

Dr. Vile and Dr. Lorenzo Cena received funding from the WCU Campus Sustainability Scholarly and Creative Activities grant. This grant funds a joint effort between faculty and students to design and implement a solar array on the new SECC building with the goal of creating the first energy-independent lab on our campus.

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Carl E. Taylor Lifetime Achievement Award



Dr. Gopal Sankaran MD, DrPH, MNAMS, CHES®

Dr. Sankaran was honored with the 2020 Carl E. Taylor Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his Outstanding Lifetime Achievements in International Health at the 148th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association. This award was presented by the International Health Section during the virtual Social and Awards Reception on Tuesday, October 27th.

Faculty Service

National

Dr. Sankaran served as the Chair of the Editorial Board of American Journal of Public Health from November 2019 to October 2020. He chaired the Ethics subcommittee of the Editorial Board and served as a member of the Strategic Planning subcommittee and Membership Engagement subcommittee. He was the Vice Chair of the Editorial Board the previous year and ended his two terms (a total of five years) on the Editorial Board in October 2020. Presented (virtually) an annual report of the Editorial Board activities and accomplishments to the Executive Board of the American Public Health Association on October 23, 2020.

Dr. Sankaran has been appointed to the Publications Board of the American Public Health Association for a three-year term and begins his service in November 2020.

Dr. Sankaran served as an invited External Reviewer of a new Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts in Public Health proposal developed by the University of Massachusetts, Boston (October 2020)

Dr. Sankaran served as an invited External Reviewer of the Bachelor of Science in Health Education and Promotion proposal developed by Purdue University Global, Indianapolis (November 2020).

Local

Dr. Sankaran has been elected Secretary, Cerebral Palsy Association of Chester County for a one-year term beginning July 2020. He has served on the Board since 2000.

Dr. Sankaran continues his service as Emeritus Member of the Community Advisory Board of WHYY, a PBS affiliate.

University

Dr. Sankaran served as an invited member of Fall 2020: Transformation Team that developed guidance about the reopening of West Chester University in Fall 2020. This group was formed as an advisory group to President Chris Fiorentino and his executive team. (Summer 2020)

Dr. Sankaran served as an invited member of the CAPC-affiliated committee charged with updating the Diverse Communities Handbook and updated the Handbook (Spring and Summ 2020).

We Seek Your Feedback!

A core value of our APHA Public Health Code of Ethics is Inclusivity and Engagement in which... Public health practitioners and organizations have an ethical responsibility to be transparent, to be accountable to the public at large, and to include and engage diverse publics, communities, or stakeholders in their decision making.

As our valued MPH program stakeholder, you are invited to provide essential program input in a series of brief anonymous surveys. Your feedback will help ensure our program remains relevant to you and the public health workforce at large.

Survey for Public Health & Social Work Professionals

West Chester University and Temple University are collaborating to research job satisfaction and burnout among master's level social work and public health professionals. They are interested in building a model to assist in understanding the individual and organizational-level predictors and mediators of burnout to help prepare students and develop professional workshops. This research also has the potential to help social work and public health administrators better support employees at the frontlines of public health crises that have received recent global attention: COVID-19 and systemic racism. This research is approved by the West Chester University Institutional Review Board (protocol #20200908D). Please copy and paste the link below to begin the 20-minute anonymous survey:

https://wcupa.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV 6RV3CWKRkU2OEWV?Q CHL=email

Survey Seeking Input on Revised MPH Program Vision, Mission, and Values

You are invited to provide input on our latest draft revision of our Vision, Mission, and Values. We thank those who provided feedback in our initial round. Survey results are for program quality improvement purposes only and we will share our finalized statements in the next MPH Connections. Please copy and paste the link to complete the 2-minute anonymous survey:

https://wcupa.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV cusG5hWPAWcJKzH

How Can We Help YOU and Your Agency?

Please let us know if you have any MPH internship needs in the areas of community health, health care management, or environmental health. We are here to assist in building your agency's capacity.

- Our internship is called the Applied Learning Experience and it is designed to be of mutual benefit to the student and community partner.
- Students are required to complete two work products to be of benefit to your agency and compose & implement a major project at the site.
- We are currently phasing out of our 2-semester 300-hour experience and into a 1-semester 200-hour experience. We have students who enrolled in our program prior to Fall 2019 who will continue to complete the 300-hour experience, while students enrolled as of Fall 2019 will complete the new 200-hour experience.
- Students are available for in-person or remote. Internship experiences in the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.
- Although we do not formally match students with sites, we introduce and highly recommend a student to consider a site when a match in expertise and interest arises.

Please forward any internship announcement to our Director of Internship and Practicum Experiences, Stephanie Kienle at skienle@wcupa.edu.

What are the responsibilities of a Site Supervisor?

To provide supervision of the student, orient student to the agency and work tasks, provide an opportunity for the student to engage in professional practice activities, mutually determine the work products and major project plan which will be of benefit to the agency, and complete final evaluations and discuss evaluations with student to enhance learning.

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Professional Development Opportunities

The MAR-PHTC is a partnership working to strengthen capabilities of the public health workforce to support the delivery of high quality public health services in the Mid-Atlantic region. Check out the virtual trainings here.



Save the date for the first virtual Mid-Atlantic Public Health Conference on January 14-15, 2021. It is co-hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Partnership of the public health associations of PA, MD, and DE. This conference is a fantastic opportunity to engage with regional public health students, professionals, and partners! Check soon for an agenda at http://www.pa-pha.org/.



JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram for MPH Student Advisory Board announcements

https://www.instagram.com/wcumphsab/

LinkedIn for job & professional development opportunities

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6531281/

Facebook for campus events & program/student highlights

https://www.facebook.com/WCUmph



Wishing You Happy Holidays



Best Wishes for the New Year!