FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: AMARA EZEAMAMA, PH.D.

Dr. Amara Ezeamama is an assistant professor in the College of Public Health’s Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Amara received her Ph.D. in Epidemiology from Brown University and completed her Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at Harvard University. Amara, originally from Anambra State in Eastern Nigeria, entered the field of public health because, “It is a field that values my tendency to be curious and ask lots of questions. It affords me the luxury of combining my love for biomedical research with opportunities to teach and nurture new talent as a faculty member.” Amara chose UGA over other universities because there was an opportunity for intellectual and empirical synergy between her research and the research of other UGA faculty. Athens also appealed to her as a safe environment in which to raise a family.

Amara’s research projects focus on applied global infectious diseases and malnutrition. Amara was recently awarded two internal grants for her research, one from the College of Public Health and the other from the UGA Research Foundation. These internal grants will enable her to conduct formative HIV research in Uganda that will inform larger subsequent research projects.

Personally, Amara’s main source of fun is her husband, Bright, and her two children, Sarah and Benjamin. When asked about her children, Amara said, “I cannot stop marveling at the fact that they are mine and how much joy they have brought into my life.”
MEET THE NEW HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Dr. Neale Chumbler is beginning his second year as Head of the Department of Health Policy and Management. He came to UGA from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) where he was Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology, Director of the Institute for Research on Social Issues, and Director of the Survey Research Center. At IUPUI, he also served as the Associate Director of the Center for Implementing Evidence-Based Practice, a national research center of excellence in which he was also Director of the Interdisciplinary Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program. Prior to that, he spent eight productive years at the College of Public Health and Health Professions at the University of Florida.

At IUPUI, Neale was a change agent. He implemented reviews of the undergraduate curriculum and faculty in a department with declining credit hours. Existing courses were updated and new courses were added, resulting in a 20% increase in enrollment in the first full year of the revamped program. At the Institute for Research on Social Issues, he assembled multidisciplinary research teams that brought together scientists from medical sociology, medical geography, health communications, and health economics. Funding in his department increased by nearly 40% under his leadership, brought about in part by three large grants of his own from the National Institutes of Health and the Indiana State Department of Health.

Neale’s primary and longstanding research expertise is in access to health care. He also has extensive experience implementing and evaluating community-based health interventions. He recently received funding from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to investigate ways to optimize medical care and was funded by the Atlanta VA in Decatur, Georgia to evaluate a stroke rehabilitation program. In collaboration with colleagues at the UGA Terry College of Business, Neale developed an MPH/MBA dual degree program that will be implemented in January 2014. When asked about his future plans for the department, Neale said he will continue to make the department student-centered with more service learning opportunities and create new undergraduate and graduate concentrations in public health.
MEET THE NEW HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROMOTION AND BEHAVIOR

Dr. Nathan Hansen arrives from Yale University to begin his term as Head of the Department of Health Promotion and Behavior in Fall 2013. At Yale, he served as Director for Global Mental Health and HIV Prevention in the Department of Psychiatry in the School of Medicine. He also served as Director of the Developmental Core in the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA) in the School of Public Health.

Nathan’s research focuses on the development of innovative interventions to prevent new HIV infections and improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. In particular, Nathan’s initiatives seek to provide support to survivors of trauma to reduce high HIV-transmission risk behaviors and increase adherence to antiretroviral therapy and treatment appointments.

His research portfolio includes projects in New Haven, CT, New York City, Liberia, Sierra Leone, India, and Russia. He arrives at UGA as Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator of eight active research grants, all funded by the National Institutes of Health. In addition to publishing more than 50 papers in some of the top journals in the field, Nathan has taught courses on HIV infection, prevention and treatment; HIV in the context of family violence and sexual abuse; and quantitative methods and has offered numerous workshops on grant writing. Regarding his new role at UGA, he said, “I look forward to working with my new colleagues in the Department of Health Promotion and Behavior and across the College of Public Health. I plan to build upon our College’s strong domestic and international research portfolios and provide increased opportunities for UGA students to obtain a global vision and become engaged in meaningful scholarship and service to enhance the health of individuals locally, nationally, and globally.”

Moving to Athens is Nathan’s first foray into the South and he is looking forward to having a big-time football team to be excited about. That said, being an avid Mets fan, he’s going to have to come to terms with living in the Brave’s backyard.
NEW CPH FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

The College of Public Health is pleased to introduce 10 new faculty appointments in 2013.

**Amanda Abraham, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management

**Amara Ezeamama, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics

**Nathan Hansen, Ph.D.**  
Department Head and Associate Professor, Department of Health Promotion and Behavior

**Curtis Harris, Ph.D.**  
Associate Director, Institute for Disaster Management and Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management

**Katie Hein, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor and Undergraduate Coordinator, Department of Health Promotion and Behavior

**Hanwen Huang, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics

**Koichiro Otani, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management

**Candace Parker, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor, Undergraduate Coordinator, and Director of Undergraduate Minor in Public Health, Department of Health Policy and Management

**Trina Salm Ward, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor (joint appointment with the School of Social Work) and MSW/MPH Dual Degree Program Coordinator, Department of Health Promotion and Behavior

**Anne Marie Zimeri, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor, Undergraduate Coordinator, and Internship Program Coordinator, Department of Environmental Health Science
FOCUS ON THE INSTITUTE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The Institute for Disaster Management (IDM) seeks to reduce casualties and social disruption from possible mass casualty events, including natural disasters and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). IDM supports planning, risk analysis, professional training, and the development of response capabilities and infrastructure. The Institute has a team of internationally-recognized experts in fields such as emergency management, WMD, disaster modeling, and public health.

Dr. Cham Dallas, Professor and Director of the Institute (pictured far right) derives his professional passion from his personal experiences with Hurricane Camille in 1969. As a result of seeing the carnage of this natural disaster up close and personally, Cham dedicated his life to disaster management and public health. Cham has an international reputation in toxicology and disaster situations with serious population impact. He spent a decade conducting research and overseeing humanitarian efforts following the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and has made seven trips to Japan to assist in the recovery of the Fukushima earthquake/tsunami/nuclear disaster area. Altogether, Cham has 20 years of experience worldwide on toxicity aspects of WMD and has conducted research at over 40 institutions.

Dr. Curt Harris, Assistant Professor and Associate Director of IDM, entered the field of public health “to make a difference,” which he believes his research is doing. Curt is currently working with over 140 hospitals in Georgia and four regional hospitals to conduct tabletop and full-scale exercises to test their abilities to respond to, and maintain operations throughout, catastrophic events such as tornadoes, hazardous spills, and pandemic influenza episodes.

Dr. William Bell, IDM’s Senior Research Scientist, has been instrumental in working with the Georgia Department of Public Health to establish an operational plan for the evacuation of special needs populations, such as nursing home residents, in the event of a large-scale disaster.

IDM works with state and federal organizations as well as private partners to develop a coordinated research and training program for standardized mass casualty healthcare nationwide with a focus on medical training, mass casualty planning and response, and information technology applications. The Institute has planned and implemented anti-terrorism, natural disaster, and mass casualty drills and exercises in dozens of states. One of the largest interactive hospital exercises with mass casualties in the United States was conducted by IDM Investigators in 2006 and involved 129 hospitals interacting with real-time medical responses to scientifically relevant pandemic flu casualty model inputs. IDM has had an exceptional degree of extramural funding, averaging over $1.1 million per year since its formation in 2006.
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONTINUES RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP WITH COLLEAGUES IN CHINA

In early April 2013, four UGA College of Public Health investigators traveled to Wuxi, China to discuss current and future public health research collaborations with colleagues at the Wuxi Center for Disease Control and Prevention. During the week-long visit, Dr. Phillip Williams, Dean of the College of Public Health (pictured bottom left), Dr. Jia-Sheng Wang, Department Head and UGA Athletic Association Professor of Environmental Health Science (pictured bottom center), Dr. Xiaozhong (John) Yu, Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Science (pictured bottom right), and Dr. Timothy Heckman, Associate Dean for Research and Professor of Health Promotion and Behavior, met with faculty and staff at the Wuxi Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Shanghai Pudong New District Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Jiang Ying City Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

On April 8th, the four visiting UGA faculty members made the following presentations to a large audience at the Wuxi Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

- “Schools of Public Health in the United States.” Phillip Williams, Ph.D.
- “Environmental Cause of Human Cancer.” Jia-Sheng Wang, Ph.D.
- “Lessons Learned for Workplace Safety and Health: Substituting an Untested Chemical for a Bad One. The Tragic Mistake Called 1-bromopropane.” Xiaozhong Yu, M.D., Ph.D.
- “AIDS and Aging in China: Current Issues and Potential Collaborations Between China and the UGA College of Public Health.” Timothy Heckman, Ph.D.

The partnership between the UGA College of Public Health and the Wuxi Center for Disease Control and Prevention was initially established in Fall 2008 through the efforts of Dr. Jia-Sheng Wang to create stronger ties between UGA and public health institutions in China. Since 2008, UGA faculty members have made several trips to China; their colleagues at the Wuxi Center for Disease Control and Prevention have in turn made several trips to Georgia to continue research collaborations. The UGA College of Public Health sends students to China each summer to work with colleagues at the Wuxi Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Several Wuxi Center for Disease Control and Prevention employees have visited UGA and spent several months working with UGA faculty and students.
EXTERNAL FUNDING

External funding by CPH faculty continues to show a positive trajectory. The graph below shows that CPH faculty obtained $8,137,846 in external funding in FY2013, the most external funding obtained annually by CPH faculty in the College's history. Of the tenured and tenure-track faculty members in the College, 72% received external funding in FY2013.

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RESEARCH RESOURCES

Funding Opportunities from All Federal Government Agencies
http://www.grants.gov

NIH K-Awards Kiosk
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide

New Facilities and Administrative Cost Rates for Proposals and Awards
http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/osp/frequent-info

New eResearch Portal for Grants and Awards
http://grant.ovpr.uga.edu

New eResearch Portal for IRB
http://irb.ovpr.uga.edu
RECENT CPH RECIPIENTS OF EXTERNAL FUNDING

Public Health Relevance: Cancer “signatures” developed from high dimensional data, such as microarrays and single nucleotide polymorphism arrays, hold the promise of making cancer treatments more personalized to the individual patient. This proposal will develop innovative statistical methods for determining how many tumor samples are required to identify a “signature.” The new sample size methods will be validated by combining together high dimensional cancer patient data from existing data warehouses.

Public Health Relevance: HIV-infected rural persons are 1.3 times more likely than their urban counterparts to be diagnosed with depression. This randomized clinical trial is testing if a nine-session, telephone-administered, interpersonal psychotherapy intervention can reduce depressive symptoms in HIV-infected persons living in rural areas of the United States who are diagnosed with depression.

Public Health Relevance: In the setting of bars and restaurants, where indoor smoking is banned and outdoor smoking areas are available, the primary objectives of this proposal are to conduct systematic exposure and acute health endpoint assessments in non-smokers using environmental markers of secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure, biomarkers of SHS exposure, and biomarkers of acute oxidative stress and pulmonary injury. These data are important for human health risk assessment and policy making relevant to SHS exposures in these outdoor settings - an area of growing public health concern.

Public Health Relevance: To obtain a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying success or failure to quit smoking, we propose to develop new statistical methods for analyzing two existing data sets involving the use of electronic diaries to monitor the moods and environments of smokers in real time. Beyond the smoking data considered here, the proposed methods have broad applications in public health, ranging from analysis of addictive behaviors to investigations of patterns of asthma attacks, epileptic seizures, recurrent tumors in cancer patients, and more.

Public Health Relevance: The proposed research will provide a basis for rational and quantitative evaluation of the prevalence of HIV-1 intra-subtype recombinants, which is critical for tracking dynamic and complex HIV epidemics and designing improved antiviral therapies and vaccines.
SELECTED RECENT PUBLICATIONS (UGA CPH Faculty Members Shown In Bold)


