Happy 50th Birthday to
The Department of
Biostatistics and Epidemiology
at UMass!

Lisa Chasan-Taber, Chair and Professor of Epidemiology
On behalf of The Executive Planning Committee:
Stanley Lemeshow
David Hosmer
Anne Stoddard
Edward Stanek
Jane McCusker
Harris Pastides
Stephen Gehlbach
Elaine Puleo
Martha Zorn
Lisa Chasan-Taber
Arnold House – Many Years Ago

Born as a program in ~1972
(95% CI: 1970-1974)
as part of the Division of Public Health
Deans of SPHHS
BIOSTATISTICS / EPIDEMIOLOGY

Professors Gehlbach, Hosmer, Lemeshow, McCusker, Tuthill; Associate Professors Pastides, Stoddard; Assistant Professors Bigelow, Stanek

The graduate program in biostatistics and epidemiology recognizes the close academic and professional relationship that exists between these two disciplines. The program reflects the interest that epidemiologists have in study design and data analysis and the interest that biostatisticians have in substantive issues of medical and public health research. The primary goals of biostatistics are to create the theoretical and applied statistical methodology necessary to design laboratory, medical, and public health studies to undertake quantitative evaluation and measurement, and to use statistical inferences to arrive at appropriate conclusions from medical and public health data. The primary goals of epidemiology are to describe the distribution of diseases in the community; to identify, through carefully designed research studies, the determinants of disease; and to aid in the development and evaluation of health programs. Students may concentrate in either epidemiology or biostatistics, and are encouraged to mix courses from both disciplines.
1997 BioEpi Faculty & Staff
Epidemiology Areas of Expertise
Research Collaborations

- Our faculty are leaders for national and global projects funded by

  NIH  CDC  Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  DARPA
  Baystate Health  UMass Chan Medical School  Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health  World Health Organization  United Nations  Harvard University
Hankinson Receives Campus, National Honors

Associate Dean for Research, Susan Hankinson, has been named a Distinguished Professor of Epidemiology by the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The title Distinguished Professor is conferred on select, highly accomplished faculty who have already achieved the rank of professor and who meet a demanding set of qualifications.

BioEpi In the News

Balasubramanian to Advance Data Analysis From Metabolomics Research

The National Institutes of Health has awarded associate professor of biostatistics Raji Balasubramanian $1.17 million grant to advance the analysis of data from metabolomics research. These studies examine at the molecular level how the links between metabolic action and the risk of chronic health conditions, from heart disease and stroke to breast cancer and other complex disorders.

Volberg to Serve on Lancet Public Health Commission on Gambling

Research Professor of Epidemiology Rachel Volberg has been invited to serve on The Lancet Public Health Commission on Gambling. She joins an international, multidisciplinary group aiming for transformational change in policy and political action.

In announcing the commission, The Lancet Public Health cites the need for "scientific inquiry and response to an urgent, neglected, understudied, and worsening public health predicament." Regulators and legislators have struggled to keep pace with the rapid development of the commercial gambling industry, they note, adding that "Online gambling and its marketing remain poorly regulated in many nations and the risks posed by expanding commercial gambling, and specifically online gambling, are high, especially due to the lack of support mechanisms for those most impacted by gambling harms."

The commission will apply a public health lens to gambling-related harms, examining the multiple intersections between the social, commercial, and political determinants of health. Volberg, who has studied gambling and problem gambling across the world for more than 30 years, is one of only two North Americans named to the commission.

Excellence in Teaching

The SPHHS named Krishna Poudel, associate professor of health promotion and policy, as the recipient of its 2020-21 College Outstanding Teacher Award. The award is given annually to one SPHHS faculty member who demonstrates excellence and creativity in teaching, a positive impact on their students and a mastery of their subject. The College Outstanding Teacher Award program is co-administered by the UMass Amherst Center for Teaching and Learning.

The selection committee noted Poudel's support from current and former undergraduate and graduate students as well as colleagues. They describe him as a caring and motivating mentor, one who "not only values my opinion, but also makes a point to prove the process from which I have arrived at that conclusion."

In addition, the SPHHS named Carol Bigelow, research associate professor of biostatistics and epidemiology, as the winner of its University Without Walls (UWW) Outstanding Teacher Award, and health promotion and advocacy professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Carol Bigelow

Outstanding Teacher Award

Vankim to Investigate Stress and Sexual Orientation Disparities in Risk for Type 2 Diabetes

Assistant Professor of Epidemiology Nicole Vankim has received a four-year, $600,000 early career development award from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases to investigate physiological stress and sexual orientation disparities in risk for type 2 diabetes among women.

Vankim, who specializes in LGBT health, hopes the new research will reveal the specific stress pathways that contribute to sexual orientation disparities and allow for the development of evidence-based public health efforts and targeted intervention strategies to reduce type 2 diabetes risk among sexual minority women.
Facts and Figures

- 91 Graduate Students
  - 47 Masters
  - 44 Doctoral
- 38 Active Grants
- 17 Active PIs
- Total Project Costs of $38.2 million in 2021
Students
1989 - BioEpi Spring Picnic
Programs by the numbers

**Biostatistics Program**
- 14 MS students
- 1 4+1 student
- 22 PhD students

**Epidemiology Program**
- 7 MS students
- 18 MPH students
- 7 4+1 students
- 22 PhD students
Students at Biostat-sponsored "HackEbola" event

We have a modern, rigorous curriculum, motivated by problems that arise in working with real datasets.
Women in Data Science Conference
Society for Epidemiologic Research
Student Extracurriculars

Avoid awkward silence by taking the stairs.

Next time race the elevator and take the stairs.

Mt. Everest Challenge

1st Annual BIOEPI Turkey Tetraphalon 2020