

APHA STATISTICS SECTION NEWSLETTER FALL 2007

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100th Anniversary of the Statistics Section

In 1872 the American Public Health Association was founded with vital statistics as the foundation since there was a clear need to improve disease classification, surveillance and vital events registration. In 1906, citing the need to develop a closer working relationship among registration officials, to promote more effective systems of vital statistics, to aid the adoption of uniform registration systems and to publish statistical data, Cressy Wilbur lobbied for the formal creation of a Vital Statistics Section at the APHA Annual Meeting in Mexico City. Dr. Wilbur achieved final approval and formation of the section during the 1907 annual meeting in Atlantic City and the first official year of the APHA Statistics Section was completed in 1908.



**Cressie L. Wilbur,
1865-1928**

The 136th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in San Diego, CA (October 25-29, 2008) will mark the 100th Anniversary of the Statistics Section. The Statistics Section has formed a 100th Anniversary Celebration Committee led by Marcia Testa (testa@hsph.harvard.edu) and Larry Moulton (moulton@jhsph.edu) to plan celebration activities and gala events. If you are interested in getting involved or would like information please contact Marcia or Larry.

Recap of the 134th Annual APHA Meeting, November 4-8, 2006 in Boston

We had a very successful program in Boston thanks to the hard work of our session organizers, reviewers, and section leaders. APHA's theme for 2006 was "Public Health and Human Rights." Several thanks go to a number of people who helped make the 2006 Annual Meeting stimulating and fun, including: David Williamson, Larry Moulton, Marcia Testa, Martin Weinrich, Dedun Ingram, Bill Pan, Brenda Gillespie, Andy White, Janet Eyster, Jim Leeper, John Hall, and

Linda Marc. I likely forgot to mention several others who contributed to our Section over the year, my apologies. Important highlights of the meeting are summarized below:

Awards & Special Events – Boston, MA

An exceptional class of awardees was honored at the 134th meeting in Boston. It is my pleasure to recognize them once again:

Spiegelman Award – Francesca Dominici

The Spiegelman Award was established to honor Mortimer Spiegelman for his exceptional achievements to statistics in the areas of demography and public health. The Award, which is given to a statistician aged 40 or younger who has made outstanding contributions to public health statistics, was bestowed upon Dr. Francesca Dominici of the Department of Biostatistics at The Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Dominici received her PhD in Statistics from the University of Padua, Italy and joined the Hopkins faculty in 1997. She is an international leader in environmental statistics and epidemiology, with publications in several topics including air quality effects on mortality, Bayesian methods applied to toxicology, quantile estimation to approximate medical expenditures, health services outcome research, and causal inference.



Statistics Section Awards

The Statistics Section annually recognizes and honors three section members employed in Academia, Government, and Industry, respectively, for their outstanding contributions to statistics and public health. In 2006, three exceptional people were recognized:

Academic Awardee – Curt Meinert. Dr. Meinert is world renown for his expertise in the methodology and conduct of clinical trials. He is the Director and founder of The Johns Hopkins Center for Clinical Trials, founder and editor of the journal *Controlled Clinical Trials*, Professor in the Departments of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and a Fellow of the American Heart Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



Curt Meinert

Government Awardee – Linda Bilheimer. Dr. Bilheimer is the Director of the Office of Analysis and Epidemiology at the National Center for Health Statistics, CDC. Dr. Bilheimer was recognized for her lifelong dedication to apply research results to improve health care and health insurance in several areas of public service, including her work at the Congressional Budget Office, Mathematica Policy Research, and the Arkansas Department of Health.

Industry Awardee – William Gould. Dr. Gould is the founder and president of STATA Corp and a pioneer in the development of powerful, reliable, and affordable statistical software for the statistics and public health community. Through the development of STATA, Dr. Gould has nurtured the growth of a true community of users dedicated to helping each other keep the software abreast on cutting edge statistical, biostatistical, and econometric methodology.



Larry Moulton presents the Industry Award to William Gould

Lowell Reed Lecture – Ted Colton

The Lowell Reed Lecture honors Lowell Reed, chair of the Department of Biostatistics at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health from 1926-1948, Dean of the School of Public Health from 1937-1946, and President of the University from 1953-1956. He started the tradition of Biostatistics faculty collaborating not only in the School of Public Health, but with biomedical scientists in the School of Medicine. He developed a technique to estimate ED-50 and is well-known for his work on the Reed-Frost epidemic models.



David Williamson and Ted Colton

The 2006 Lowell Reed Lecturer was Dr. Ted Colton, Professor and Chair (Emeritus) of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Boston University School of Public Health as well as Vice President for Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Battelle CRO, Inc. Dr. Colton is an intellectual leader for statistical common sense and is involved in a number of statistical editorial publications, including the editorial board for the *Annals of Epidemiology*, co-editor for the *Encyclopedia of Biostatistics* (2nd Edition), co-editor for the *Wiley Series in Biostatistics*, and founding co-editor of *Statistics in Medicine*. The title of Dr. Colton's lecture was "Ten Commandments for a Successful Career in Statistics"

Upcoming 135th Annual APHA Meeting, Washington DC, November 3-7, 2008

For the second time in 4 years, the Annual Meeting of the APHA will be held in our Nation's Capital. The theme for this year's meeting is "*Politics, Policy and Public Health*" to emphasize the role politicians and policies have in transitioning research into action. We have an exciting list of sessions planned by Martin Weinrich as well as a student session organized by Larry Moulton. Session sponsored by the Statistics Section are listed in the table below, locations are TBA. Additional information on sessions (speakers, paper titles, etc.) is available online at http://apha.confex.com/apha/135am/techprogram/program_786.htm.

Of particular note are our two invited sessions on Monday, November 5. The first, *Person-Centered Approaches for Longitudinal Data Analysis*, organized by Jichuan Wang, will demonstrate different approaches to modeling growth trajectories or health-related outcomes.

The second, *The NHIS: 50 Years of Progress*, organized by Michael Davern, will highlight the 50th Anniversary of the National Health Interview Survey and give attendees a better sense of the broad range of uses of the NHIS data. In addition, the Statistics Section has invited Dr. Scott Zeger, the Frank Hurley – Catharine Dorrier Professor and Chair of the Department of Biostatistics at The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health to present the *Lowell Reed Lecture*. The title of his lecture is: “***Biostatistics: Reflections on what Lowell Reed might have thought about where it is and where it is headed***”



Session Number	Title	Time
Monday, November 5, 2007		
3068.0	Applied Topics in Health Survey Methodology	8:30am-10:00am
3162.0	<u>Invited Session:</u> Person-Centered Approaches for Longitudinal Data Analysis in Public Health Studies	10:30am-12:00pm
3258.0	Innovation in Biostatistical Methods and Applications	12:30pm-2:00pm
3364.0	Applications of Statistical Methods to GIS-Based Analyses of Public Health Problems	2:30pm-4:00pm
3364.1	Novel Applications of Health Survey Methodology	2:30pm-4:00pm
3433.0	<u>Invited Session:</u> The National Health Interview Survey: 50 Years of Progress	4:30pm-6:00pm
Tuesday, November 6, 2007		
4071.0	Student Paper Session Featuring Johns Hopkins University	8:30am-10:00am
4101.0	Statistics Poster Session	12:30pm-1:30pm
4260.0	Lowell Reed Lecture; Spiegelman and Statistics Section Awards	2:30pm-4:00pm
4334.0	Special Annual Statistical Methodology Session: Accounting for Confounding in Observational Studies	4:30pm-6:00pm
Wednesday, November 7, 2007		
5084.0	Statistics, Measurement, Health Outcomes, and Public Policy	8:30am-10:00am
5147.0	Uses of Path Analysis, Factor Analysis , and Item Response Theory in Public Health Research	12:30pm-1:30pm
5202.0	Modeling Techniques for Health Outcomes Research	2:30pm-4:00pm

Keep an  out for the Statistics Section Survey

For the first time in over a decade, the Statistics Section will administer a survey to its members. It is crucial that we maximize response rates in order for our section to better understand how the Statistics Section can improve in order to respond to the needs of our members. I encourage you to fill out this survey.