

# Department of Mental Health Alumni and Friends Newsletter

June 2015

## Letter from the Chair:

It has been another great year thanks to our outstanding faculty, staff, students, affiliated faculty, and alumni! All have continued to thrive and receive recognition, as you will see in this newsletter. Hopefully, you have also been receiving our weekly roundup emails so you know what we are all collectively up to! If you don't, and would like to be included, please let us know at [mmaffet1@jhu.edu](mailto:mmaffet1@jhu.edu).

I am thrilled to report that we have hired Drs. Heather Volk and Rashelle Musci to join our faculty. Heather will be moving from USC this July to begin August 1 in our department and with the Wendy Klag Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities. She brings expertise in environmental and genetic epidemiology of autism. Rashelle has already been affiliated with our department and began her new role June 1. She brings expertise in latent growth modeling, child development, and the interplay of genetic risk and interventions. Welcome Heather and Rashelle!

Our year-long revision of our core courses is now complete. The newly improved series ran for the first time this past academic year, and according to our year-end survey, was very well-received! We have also developed a plan for a new comprehensive exam format and timing, which will be offered for the first time this coming January. We will now shift to focus on other aspects of curriculum including required courses, advanced doctoral training, and gaps in types of courses offered.

Finally, and importantly, the School of Public Health enters its year-long Centennial Celebration this fall. Events are planned throughout the entire year spanning summer 2015 – summer 2016. Each department is sponsoring a month of activities, with ours occurring in October this fall. We will be celebrating on World Mental Health Day on October 10, and will have many events throughout the month including several symposia, seminars, poster sessions, virtual forums, and an alumni panel and dinner. Stay tuned for specific calendar dates and virtual events. We hope to engage all of you in this effort to show the school, and the world, what mental health in public health has accomplished in the last 100 years and what we impact we can make on the next 100 years!

Our alumni and affiliates are one of our greatest assets and we are so grateful for your support and interest. Here's to another great year! - *Dani Fallin*

### To help provide a deeper understanding of the complex issues currently facing our city, the University held two related events:

The inaugural JHU Forums on *Race in America*, April 30, 2015, featured a discussion between three of the nation's leading scholars on race: Ta-Nehisi Coates, The Atlantic National Correspondent, Dr. Nathan Connolly, JHU Assistant Professor of History, and our own Dr. Debra Furr-Holden, [web.jhu.edu/administration/provost/initiatives/forums-on-race-series/](http://web.jhu.edu/administration/provost/initiatives/forums-on-race-series/)

The *Engage Baltimore* forum, May 8, 2015 brought together government, community and School leaders. We heard honest and candid insights from Congressman Elijah Cummings, Baltimore City Health Commissioner Leana Wen, Professor Tom LaVeist and community leaders Selwyn Ray, James "JT" Timpson, Kenneth Morrison, Naon Locust, Antoine Bennett, and Reverend Debra Hickman in a panel led by Janice Bowie. <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/62026320>

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## Congratulations to the Department Graduates

### Doctoral Success

#### Degree Recipients: Doctors of Philosophy

**Jessica Hattie Nicole Bottiani**  
Advisor: Dr. Tamar Mendelson  
*Equitable School Climate*

**Qiana Latoya Brown**  
Advisor: Debra C. Furr-Holden, PhD  
*Tobacco Outlet Density, Proximity, and Tobacco Use Among African American Young Adults in Baltimore City: Mechanisms of Action*

**Lian Yu-Chen**  
Advisor: Ramin Mojtabai, MD  
*Trends, Correlates and Patterns of Concurrent Substance Use of Prescription Stimulants in the United States*

**Jeffrey Duong**  
Advisor: George Rebok, PhD  
*Ecological Predictors of Children's Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Outcomes*

**Sarah Abdallah Khasawinah**  
Advisor: Michelle Carlson, PhD  
*Brain Connectivity and Neurocognitive Health in Older Adults: The Baltimore Experience Corps Trial Brain Health Study*

**Alexandra Marie Kueider**  
Advisor: George Rebok, PhD  
*Obesity and Physical Functioning: Associations with Cognition in the Advanced Cognitive Training for Independent and Vital Elderly (ACTIVE) Cohort*

**Maya Nadison**  
Advisor: Judith Bass, PhD  
*The Role of Caregivers in the Academic Performance of Juveniles who Sexually Offend*

**Sarah Elizabeth Naeger**  
Advisor: Elizabeth Stuart, PhD  
*Associations between Community Violence and Academic Competency in Urban Elementary School*



Doctoral Graduates from left front row: *Mieka Smart, Christine Ramsey, Alexandra Kueider and Jessica Bottiani.*

Faculty from left back row: *Debra Furr-Holden, Dani Fallin (Chair), Adam Spira and George Rebok.*

#### Degree Recipients: Doctors of Philosophy (cont'd)

**Laysha Ostrow**  
Advisor: Philip Leaf, PhD  
*Mental Health Peer-run Organizations Nationwide: Characteristics and Attitudes Toward the Affordable Care Act*

**Christine Meng Ramsey**  
Advisor: Adam Spira, PhD  
*School Climate, Older Adult Characteristics, and Fulfillment of School-based Volunteer Roles in the Baltimore Experience Corps Study*

#### Degree Recipients: Doctors of Public Health

**Mieka Jasmine Smart**  
Advisor: Debra C. Furr-Holden, PhD  
*Evaluation of Environmental Strategies for Preventing Alcohol Problems on United States College Campuses*



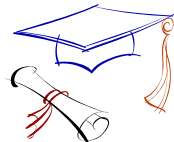
## Master's Degree Recipients

### Master's of Health Science

Rida Anmol  
Maha Haqqani  
Cameron Ferguson Hayes  
Jennica Anusua Henderson  
Gulnaz Anjam Khan  
Marissa Ann Kiyomi Kobayashi  
Anna Krasnova  
Julia Annemarie Langer  
Sarah Mason  
Heather Laine Mattson  
Emily Stahr Metzger  
Lauren Elizabeth Ruth Morris  
Robert Jason Hideo Quon  
Elizabeth Kathleen Ruiz  
Brianna Jean Sennott  
Saumya Singh  
Talia Stewart  
Martin Michael Tehan, Jr.  
Hanyuying Wang  
Olga Yatsenko  
Xueping Zhou

### Master's of Public Health (concentration in Mental Health)

Sean Andrews  
Chioma Anigbogu  
Yuri Argawal  
Sarah Ceponis  
Mark Kurzrok  
Sunny Lai  
Sarah Marshall  
Morgan Schellenberg  
Meher Singh  
Jeremy Tanner



## Student Departmental Awards 2014-15

Paul V. Lemkau Award

**Christopher Kaufmann, PhD student**

This award is made annually for outstanding performance in doctoral students in the field of Mental Health.

Morton Kramer Fund

**Vijay Varma, PhD student**

This award is made annually to a doctoral student who has demonstrated excellence in the application of biostatistical and epidemiologic methods to mental disorders.

Lucy Shum Memorial Scholarship Award

**Ryoko Susukida, PhD student**

This award is made annually to a doctoral student who has demonstrated excellence in public health policy for mental health issues.

Dr. Ali and Rose Kawi Scholarship

**Remington L. Nevin, MD, MPH, DrPH student**

This award is made annually to a Doctor of Public Health student who has demonstrated excellence in mental health issues.

## School-wide Awards 2014-15

**Lian Yu Chen, PhD '14** was elected to Phi Beta Kappa

**Trang Nguyen, Postdoctoral Fellow** was elected to Phi Beta Kappa

**April Shu, PhD Candidate**, is a 2015 Delta Omega Scholarship Competition winner for the "Applied Research Category". April was 1 of 6 recipients from a pool of 90 applications.

## Research

In calendar year 2013, the full-time tenure-track and scientist faculty published more than 227 scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals—an average of about 8 each! This total does not include chapters, abstracts and presentations. These communications have significantly advanced the field of public mental health.

In fiscal year 2014, the faculty applied for 65 grants (including competing and non-competing applications) totaling \$16,825,336. Our success rate was more than 60%, with 39 grants awarded; the total awarded to us during the year was \$10,094,179. Although we are naturally more successful with our non-competing grants, during FY 14 we submitted 49 new or competing continuation grants and 22 of these were awarded (45%!). Not bad in the current NIH climate—attesting to the quality of our faculty and their hard work and perseverance! These submissions include only grants in which our faculty were Principal Investigators—the faculty supported other investigators throughout the school and university and other institutions as well. FY 14 newly funded awards include:

- ◆ Enhancing Ugandan HIV-Affected Child Development with Caregiver Training/ [Judy Bass](#)
- ◆ Dispersion of a Ugandan Caregiver Training / [Judy Bass](#)
- ◆ Double Check: A Cultural Proficiency and Student Engagement/ [Catherine Bradshaw](#)
- ◆ Development of RCT of Gluten Free Diet in Gliadin-Positive/ [William Eaton](#)
- ◆ Long Term Effects of Depression Care on Services Use and Mortality/ [Joseph Gallo](#)
- ◆ Drug Dependence Epidemiology Training Program/ [Debra Furr-Holden](#)
- ◆ Center for Prevention and Early Intervention/ [Nicholas Ialongo](#)
- ◆ Progression and Clustering of Marijuana Use in African American/ [Nicholas Ialongo](#)
- ◆ Genetic Epidemiology of HIV Risk Behavior Trajectory/ [Brion Maher](#)
- ◆ Generalizing RCT Efficacy Evidence: Application to NIDA Clinical Trials Network/ [Ramin Mojtabai](#)
- ◆ The Development of Longitudinal Endophenotype for Aggressive and Impulsive Suicidal Behavior/ [Rashelle Musci](#)
- ◆ Sleep Disturbances and Functional Decline in Elders/ [Adam Spira](#)
- ◆ Genetic Risk Factor for Suicidal Behavior/ [Peter Zandi](#)

## Education

During this 2014-2015 academic year faculty taught more than 35 formal courses with a total enrollment of 642 students. Faculty advised 40 doctoral students, 16 postdoctoral fellows and 37 master's students. Our faculty members sat on 43 school-wide preliminary oral examinations and 48 final dissertation defense examinations for students in this department and eight other departments in the school (excluding only the laboratory departments of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Molecular Microbiology and Immunology).

A new *Global Mental Health Training Program* led by Dr. Judith Bass will welcome its inaugural trainees on July 1. In the first year, we will welcome 2 predoctoral trainees who will begin their doctoral training with the department and 2 postdoctoral fellows. The global mental health program in the department has been rapidly growing and we are excited for this new funding opportunity to strengthen our program going forward.

Applications for our doctoral program remain steady (54), and we are successfully recruiting some of the nation's best. As of now, we are expecting to be joined this fall by eight new doctoral students, 35 new master's students and six new postdoctoral fellows.

## Spotlight on Summer Institute

We have just completed our 13th annual Summer Institute in Mental Health Research. This year, we offered 10 courses including 3 online courses for the first time: Prevention Research in Mental Health, Current Issues in Military Mental Health, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Humanitarian Settings. Students from around the world join us for these short (typically 1-2 day) courses. Our attendance was up 54% from last year and over 200% from 2013!



**Want to take one next year, or send a friend?** Please contact Patty Scott ([patty.scott@jhu.edu](mailto:patty.scott@jhu.edu)) or check out the website for upcoming 2016 details. <http://www.jhsph.edu/departments/mental-health/summer-institute/>

## New Faculty

**Heather Volk, PhD**, will join the faculty as Assistant Professor on August 1. Dr. Volk's research focuses on the genetic and environmental epidemiology of autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders as well as more generally on the role of gene-environment interaction in complex disease.

**Rashelle Musci, PhD**, was selected as Assistant Professor from a strong pool of applicants for the Public Mental Health Research position. Dr. Musci was an Assistant Scientist in the Department prior to her June 1 start as Assistant Professor. Rashelle's work focuses on the interplay between genetic susceptibility, prevention intervention, environment, and developmental trajectories.

**Andrew Jaffe, PhD**, joined the faculty as Assistant Professor in August 2014. Dr. Jaffe is an Investigator at the Leiber Institute for Brain Development. His research focuses on the development and application of statistical models and approaches to high-throughput genomic data, like DNA methylation, gene expression, and sequence variation, to better understand the biological systems in the brains affected by neuropsychiatric disorders like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression.

## Faculty Promotions

**Ramin Mojtabai, MD**, was promoted to Full Professor.

**Elizabeth Stuart, PhD**, was promoted to Full Professor.

**Kelly Benke, PhD**, was promoted to Assistant Scientist.

## Faculty Awards

### Excellence in Research and Practice:

**Adam Spira** was recently awarded Fellow status through the Behavioral and Social Sciences Section of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA).

**Holly Wilcox, PhD** (joint in MH) has been selected as a Scientific Advisor for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Congratulations, Dr. Wilcox!

**Elizabeth Stuart** was recently elected Chair-Elect of the American Statistical Association's Mental Health Statistics section. She will take office on January 1, 2016

### Star Teachers and Advisors:

**Michelle Carlson, PhD**, Associate Professor, received an **Advising, Mentoring, and Teaching Recognition Award** (AMTRA) from the School.

**Elizabeth Stuart, PhD**, Professor, received an **Advising, Mentoring, and Teaching Recognition Award** (AMTRA) from the School.

## Alumni Highlight: Sachiko Kuwabara, PhD



Psychiatric epidemiologist **Sachiko Kuwabara, PhD '12**, is involved with an overlooked facet of the Ebola response in West Africa: the mental wellbeing of health workers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is relying on her expertise to help develop support services that meet the psychological needs of agency staff on the frontline of the Ebola response.

In February 2015, Kuwabara was named **deputy chief of the Deployment Risk Mitigation Unit (DRMU)**—a new team that oversees staff health, safety, and wellbeing every step of the way: before deployment, in Ebola hot zones and after returning home. Improving the human experience is at the core of every policy and reference material the unit develops.

"I am loving every second of this new role," says Kuwabara. "The work of DRMU couldn't be better suited for my skill set."

To read Dr. Kuwabara's interesting story, please visit: <http://www.jhsph.edu/departments/mental-health/alumni/enewsletter/sachiko-kuwabara-profile.html>

## Alumni Event



The Department of Mental Health hosted an alumni event on April 24 that featured keynote speaker Ronald W. Manderscheid, PhD. Dr. Manderscheid, Adjunct Professor in the Department, is Executive Director of the NACBHDD. Dr. Manderscheid discussed the advances and continuing hindrances to integrated health care. A panel discussion including Tamar Mendelson, Joseph Gallo, Adam Spira, and Judith Bass followed.



A video of the event may be found at: <https://youtu.be/g2xvEJm-krc>.

Top right: Sheppard Kellam, MD; Remington Nevin, MD, MPH '04; Debra Finnell, DNS, RN.  
Bottom right: Hannah Allen, MHS '14; Elizabeth Seaman, MHS '13; Robert Hull, MHS '92.



## Faculty Highlight: Ramin Mojtabai, MD, MPH



Dr. Mojtabai is a newly promoted Professor in the Department of Mental Health. He is also practicing psychiatrist. He also has an infectious smile!

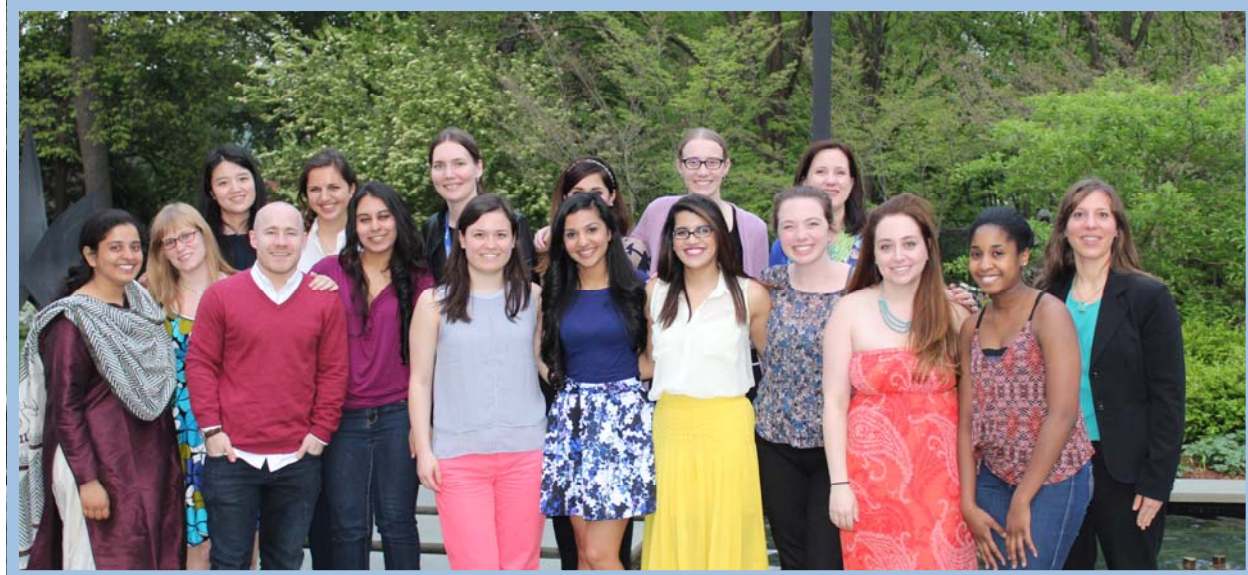
Dr. Mojtabai's research focuses on mental health services and treatment of common mental disorders in community settings. He also examines trends in use of psychiatric medications and especially antidepressant medications which are increasing prescribed and used. His research has received media coverage in various venues including New York Times and Wall Street Journal. He has been recognized with the Klerman Award from the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression (NARSAD) and the Laughlin Award from the American College of Psychiatrists.

A few of Dr. Mojtabai's recent publications include:

- ◆ Mojtabai, R. (2015). Depressed mood in middle-aged and older adults in Europe and the United States: A comparative study using anchoring vignettes. *Journal of Aging and Health*. DOI: 10.1177/0898264315585506
- ◆ Mojtabai, R., & Jorm, A. F. (2015). Trends in psychological distress, depressive episodes and mental health treatment-seeking in the United States: 2001–2012. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 174:556-561.
- ◆ Mojtabai, R., Cullen, B., Everett, A., Nugent, K. L., Sawa, A., Sharifi, V., Takayanagi, Y., Toroney, J. S., Eaton, W. W. (2014). Reasons for not seeking general medical care among individuals with serious mental illness. *Psychiatric Services* 65:818-821.

To view all of Dr. Mojtabai's publications: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Mojtabai+R>

## Photo Gallery



Above: MHS '15 graduates having dinner at Gertrude's. Also pictured are Dr. Jeanine Parisi, MHS Director (far right), and Dr. Daniele Fallin, Department Chair (back row, far right).

At left and right: MHS graduates at Convocation.

Below right: Dr. Fallin presenting Morton Kramer Fund Award to Vijay Varma, PhD student.



### Fun times at the

### End of Year Party!



## Let Us Know About Your Success!

We would love to hear how and what you're doing and your recent career highlights. We'd also like to highlight your accomplishments on our departmental alumni website. **Please keep in touch!!** Just drop an email to Michelle at [mmaffett@jhu.edu](mailto:mmaffett@jhu.edu).



Debra Furr-Holden, PhD '99; Sarah Khasawinah, PhD '15

## Faculty Recruitment 2015

We are growing! We currently have a **tenure-track faculty position** available. Please visit our website: <http://www.jhsph.edu/departments/mental-health/faculty/faculty-openings/> or simply do a Google search on "Hopkins mental health faculty positions" for details about the positions.

Please spread the word among your colleagues!

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