



ECPN Newsletter

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Meet two outstanding early career prevention scientists
- Read about highlights from the ECPN sessions at the 16th annual meeting in San Francisco
- Find out about member and alumnae news
- Learn about the new student poster contest

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A Note from the Steering Committee Chair

Hello all. I, David Wyrick, hope you enjoy the second edition of the ECPN Newsletter. I wanted to share with you some of the unexpected work I've been doing with drug and alcohol use prevention for college student-athletes and a lesson about keeping your eyes open for new opportunities. To give some background, last year, Dr. Melodie Fearnow-Kenney and I received a Phase I SBIR grant from NIDA to develop and evaluate myPlaybook, a web-based program to influence student-athlete attitudes and behaviors regarding substance use. Through a feasibility study, we worked closely with Mary Wilfert who coordinates all the alcohol and drug education programming for the NCAA. Mary helped us gain access to athletes, coaches, administrators, and commissioners as we collected data on the proposed approach and the feasibility of our idea.

As we conducted interviews and focus groups, an unanticipated opportunity began to develop. As part of our Phase I proposal, we committed to developing the first of 8

courses as a prototype. The first course targets freshman student-athletes during the fall semester. We proposed the fall freshman course as our prototype since incoming freshman are at particularly high risk for substance abuse and often ill informed regarding the NCAA banned substances and drug testing policies. Due to the lack of programming that target this population, various universities and the NCAA began to show this incredible interest in pilot testing myPlaybook.

Mel and I moved quickly and worked simultaneously with the NCAA and NIDA to promote the pilot test to NCAA Division II programs and to secure funding through an administrative supplement. Within two weeks of announcing the pilot test, more than 100 Division II athletics departments signed on to test myPlaybook. Thus, this fall, approximately 7,000 freshman student-athletes will complete myPlaybook and corresponding evaluation instruments.

Pulling this together in such a short amount of time required much work, but it has been well worth it. It is rare opportunity to conduct such a large-scale evaluation of a Phase I prototype. The resulting media attention has been overwhelming. Substance abuse is a topic that those in athletics take seriously. It has been motivating and gratifying to have such interest taken in our work and for a group such as the NCAA to recognize the need for good prevention science. Because of their interest, we have the opportunity to advance the scope of our original proposal and to conduct a much more rigorous evaluation.

We have a lot to offer as prevention scientists and can often make our greatest contributions when we allow ourselves to think outside the box and pursue opportunities even when the path is not clear. However, when the path opens and everything falls into place, the hard work all of a sudden doesn't seem so bad. I wish all of you the best of luck as you pursue those projects that most capture your passion.

San Francisco Meeting Highlights

ECPN members were very active at this year's meeting in San Francisco — over 145 were in attendance. This was the first year we had ribbons on our badges to indicate membership. We enjoyed meeting you and hope the ribbons gave you a chance to meet other ECPN members. As usual, ECPN members continued to show off their work through fascinating posters and symposiums. David Wyrick, the current Chair of the ECPN steering committee, presented Stephanie Lanza with the ECPN award for her outstanding work in prevention science. See page 2 for a description of Stephanie's current work and path from graduate school to the Penn State Methodology Center. We held a breakfast to recruit new members to the steering committee and give existing committee members a chance to sit down together and catch-up face-to-face. We also sponsored a well-attended luncheon and two symposiums, which we recap in this newsletter. We hope you will be able to join us next year in Washington, DC.



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Meet Stephanie Lanza

We were proud to honor Dr. Stephanie Lanza with the 2008 ECPN Early Career Award for her outstanding contributions to the field of prevention. Dr. Lanza is Scientific Director of The Methodology Center at Penn State University, a center devoted to the advancement and dissemination of statistical methodology related to research on the prevention and treatment of problem behaviors. Her interdisciplinary background includes a Masters in Applied Statistics (2002) and a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies (2003) from Penn State.

Dr. Lanza's career has been

characterized by both original methodological research for prevention science applications and collaborative work with prevention scientists. Her research interests include the analysis of longitudinal data, mixture models including latent class and latent transition analysis, risk assessment, and multi-level models. She has a NIDA-funded grant to develop a latent-class framework for quantifying multiple, interactive risks for developmental outcomes. She currently leads the development of SAS procedures for latent class analysis (PROC LCA) and latent transition analysis (PROC LTA). Dr. Lanza plans to continue work

to advance statistical methods for the social and health sciences, particularly as they apply to child, adolescent and early adulthood outcomes including substance use, sexual risk behavior and obesity. This past July she participated as an instructor at the program 'Understanding Drug Addiction: Focus on African Americans' Mini Medical School on Addiction, held at the Morehouse School of Medicine.

We congratulate Dr. Lanza for her many contributions in the field of prevention science. She is a leader in the field of prevention science and prevention methodology.

Meet Christian Connell

My interest in prevention science began as an undergraduate psychology student at Penn State University. During my junior year, I enrolled in a practicum course and began working as a sibling group co-leader for the Fast Track program. This was the first time I had been exposed to community- and school-based prevention, and I was excited by the approach toward youth. In my senior year, I worked as an intervention group co-leader for Fast Track and explored opportunities to broaden my training in the field of prevention. I was accepted to the Clinical-Community Psychology program at the University of South Carolina and continued my development with excellent mentors – Drs. Ron Prinz and Emilie Smith.

At USC, I also became acquainted with the field of community psychology – a discipline that shares many points of interest with prevention science. This exposure led me to become more broadly interested in the ways in which context such as family, school, and community settings influence outcomes for at-risk youth. As I neared the end of my time at USC, I looked for clinical psychology internship programs that would allow me to broaden my training in the fields of

prevention and community psychology – and made my way to my current location at The Consultation Center (TCC) at Yale University.

I am currently an Assistant Professor in the Division of Prevention and Community Research in the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine and Director of Child Development and Epidemiological Research at TCC. My interests have continued to expand since coming to Yale, though prevention science and my interest in context and protective influences on developmental processes play a central role in my research and evaluation activities. Much of my work has a strong applied component – for example, I serve as a program evaluator and consultant for multiple child-serving state agencies within the region to study outcomes for system-involved youth and families and identify individual and contextual factors that are associated with more positive outcomes for youth. Examples from this area of work include studies related to foster care and child protective service outcomes, as well as a statewide evaluation of recidivism and other outcomes among youth receiving multi-systemic therapy. Ongoing collaborations have allowed for the opportunity to conduct policy-relevant

research and evaluation and collaborate with partners on academic products related to this work.

A second area of research focuses on risks for adolescent substance use and associated behaviors (e.g., anti-social or delinquent behavior, sexual activity). This area of my work has been growing and includes work with regional, state, and national datasets to examine patterns of risk factors and their relation to risk and protective factors at the individual, family, peer, school, and community level.

A broader interest of mine is in the advanced multivariate quantitative data analytic methods. I lead a seminar on Data Analytic Methods in Prevention and Community Research for The Consultation Center's NIDA-funded Postdoctoral Training Program in Substance Abuse Prevention Research and serve as an advisor and postdoctoral supervisor within the training program.

Balancing work and family is also a personal goal. My wife, a licensed clinical social worker who recently transitioned from the Yale Child Study Center to her current role as a social worker for a local charter elementary school, and I have two children (a 7th grader and a 2nd grader) that keep us on our toes.

Database Taskforce and Symposium Highlights

The Database Taskforce is a recent collaboration between ECPN and the SPR Training Committee with a goal to facilitate and encourage secondary analyses of existing prevention datasets by helping bring together data owners and secondary data analysts. Members of the taskforce include Christian Connell, Mildred Maldonado-Molina, Ty Ridenour & Mary Terzian (of ECPN) as well as Kathleen Etz, & Wendy Gerrard (of the SPR Training Committee). Additional participation is welcome – contact Ty Ridenour at tar27@pitt.edu or any other Taskforce member.

The primary task during this first year has been to determine how best to facilitate connections between data owners and users. This effort included researching how similar efforts have been conducted

and interviewing senior prevention researchers to learn more about their concerns and obstacles to making data available. The final step in this process was a panel symposium at the SPR annual meeting titled, *Secondary Analysis of Existing Prevention Data and an Introduction to the Database Taskforce*. Panel members included Linda Collins, Lisa Dierker, Kathleen Etz, Nicholas Jalongo and Stephanie Lanza. Comments were insightful and represented the perspectives of senior prevention researchers, secondary data analysts, a funding agency and early career prevention researchers. Each of the panel members took valuable time away from their full conference schedule, provided the Taskforce with extremely helpful information and answered questions of audience

members. Much information and insight also was presented to symposium attendees about how early career researchers can best pursue collaborations with data owners.

Themes included:

- ◆ preparing data for secondary analysis requires much effort and therefore funding
- ◆ long-term funding would be required for support such as technical assistance to new analysts
- ◆ effort and flexibility were needed on the part of secondary data analysts to work around the study requirements, timelines, and goals of data owners
- ◆ supporting collaborations in the short-term would likely consist of publicizing the contact information and research topics of interest of the data owners.

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ECPN Luncheon Highlights

This year’s ECPN luncheon focused on “How to be a Successful Early Career Prevention Scientist: Success Stories from Recipients of the SPR Early Career Award.” The luncheon featured this year’s winner of the ECPN Early Career award, Dr. Stephanie Lanza, as

well as past winner of the ECPN Early Career award, Guillermo (Willy) Prado, and Melissa Stigler. The three early career scientists did an excellent job discussing their successful scientific path and shared career and life advice with other early career professionals.

Time was left for questions allowing all attendees to inquire about particular paths and share successes and struggles they have had in their path to prevention science. The luncheon was very well attended by early, mid, and senior scientists.

ECPN Context Matters Symposium Highlights

ECPN was excited to host a session at the annual meeting entitled *Context Matters: Conducting Community-Based Research*, featuring local San Francisco early career researchers. Phillip Graham, chaired the session and discussed how conducting community-based research is an integral component of prevention science. The aim of this symposium was to give mid-career researchers the opportunity to share lessons learned from conducting community-based research in diverse settings, as well as to discuss current career trajectories. Presentations included findings from both domestic and international community-based re-

search projects. Each presentation highlighted the importance of addressing community context in prevention research and applying prevention science methods in research exploring the effects of context on health-related outcomes. The session included 4 presentations:

- ◆ Alex Kral presented the work of the Urban Health Program at RTI International, focusing on community-based research methods and results.
- ◆ Megan Dunbar spoke of the benefits and challenges of working with community partners to conduct HIV prevention research with adolescent fe-

- ◆ Freya Spielberg shared her experiences with HIV testing and education in impoverished or underserved communities by discussing a computer counseling and self-testing program.
- ◆ Suneeta Krishnan presented on the Samata Health Study, discussing the ethical, legal, cultural, and logistical challenges of conducting a longitudinal, community-based study of sensitive issues among a vulnerable population (young married women in India) and strategies to respond to these challenges.

Member News

Louis Brown received the Emory L. Cowen Dissertation Award for the Promotion of Wellness and

Sarah Clinenski received the Best Dissertation on a Topic Relevant to Community Psychology Award from the Society for Community Research & Action.

Barbara Lopez published an article in the *Journal of Primary Prevention* on adolescent neurological development and an in-press article in the *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* on correlates of substance use in Hispanic youth.

Keryn Pasch is now an Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Education at UT Austin.

Elizabeth Stuart was awarded a K25 from NIMH. The 5-year project is entitled *Estimating Population Effects of Mental Health Interventions*, and it will develop methods to determine how and when results from randomized trials can be generalized to broader populations. Liz also has a paper coming out in *Prevention Science* entitled "Estimating Intervention Effects of Prevention Programs: Accounting for Noncompliance." It's by Liz Stuart, Deborah Perry, Huynh-Nhu Le, and Nicholas J. Alongo.



Mark your calendar for the 17th Annual Society for Prevention Research Conference May 26-29 at the Hyatt Regency in Washington, DC. This year's theme is the Power of Relationships: Implications for Prevention Science.

Where are they now? Alumnae News

Kenneth W. Griffin, who received the ECPN Early Career Award in 2002, is an Associate Professor of Public Health at Weill Medical College of Cornell University. He has recently published findings showing that the Life Skills Training (LST) school-based drug abuse prevention program produced long-term effects on HIV risk behaviors in a suburban White sample as young adults. He currently has an R01 from NIDA examining the long-term effects of LST in minority young adults in New York City. Dr. Griffin contributed a chapter on the epidemiology of substance use from a developmental perspective in the new *Handbook of Drug Use Etiology* published by APA.

Dr. Kelli Komro was awarded a \$1.8M grant NIAAA and National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities entitled *Etiology of Alcohol Use and Consequences among Multi-Ethnic Urban Youth*. The goal is to examine trajectories and multiple levels of influences on alcohol use among urban poor adolescents.

Congrats to Julia Jackson-Newsom on her new position as Director of Research in the School of Education at UNC Greensboro.

The NEW ECPN Student Poster Contest

At the 2009 annual meeting, ECPN will debut the *ECPN Student Poster Contest*. The purpose of this contest is to encourage student attendance and participation in the annual meeting, increase student visibility at the conference, attract new student members to SPR and ECPN, and encourage existing student members to become full members upon graduation. Both master's and doctoral level students are encouraged to enter.

Student submissions for the poster contest are due October 20th as part of the normal presentation submission process. To enter in the poster contest, students should indicate their participation on the poster abstract submission form. Contestants must be the primary and presenting author on the abstract submission.

The posters will be displayed Wednesday night during the SPR poster session, and winners will be announced on Thursday at the awards reception. The top 3 posters will receive a \$250 travel award plus a one-year SPR membership. The top 10% of posters will receive a one-year SPR membership.

Judging criteria will include innovation, importance of the research topic to the field, quality, use of advanced methods, and contribution to prevention science. ECPN Steering Committee members and SPR Senior Scientists will serve as judges. Posters will be due approximately two weeks prior to the SPR meeting to enable thorough reviews. We are very excited by this new initiative (and the great prizes) and look forward to seeing your posters. Please contact Keryn Pasch with questions (kpasch@mail.utexas.edu).