



Photo: Debra Kaysen

Congolese counselors discuss cognitive processing therapy

Easing the Global Burden Of Mental Health

Deepa Rao has heard it many times, especially in South India:

A husband treats his wife poorly, and that emotional or physical abuse leads to depression. The woman feels trapped at home and won't seek treatment or any kind of health screening. She stops taking her medication for an infectious disease.

And there you have the start of a public health problem.

Rao and her colleagues say stigma, poor mental health, and substance abuse drive many global health problems, including diabetes, preterm birth, trauma injuries, self-harm, and motor vehicle deaths. "Mental health has been a neglected disease in global health," says Rao, co-director of the UW Global Mental Health Program, housed in the School's Department of Global Health, where she is also an associate professor.

"It goes back to the central reason why I'm working in global mental health," Rao says. "Stigma and depression interfere with taking medications and engaging in treatment. People could be miserable and isolating themselves."

More than one billion people suffer from a mental health illness or substance abuse problem.

"Depression alone drives 10 percent of all disability globally—that's three times more than diabetes, about 10 times more than heart disease, and 40

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Healing Survivors Of Sexual Violence In the Congo

UW clinical psychologist Debra Kaysen teaches a type of therapy that is easing the anguish of rape survivors in war-torn countries.

The therapy was so effective in the Democratic Republic of Congo it prompted one counselor to tell Kaysen: "When I first saw these women they were ashamed. They couldn't lift their heads up. Now, they glow."

That brought tears to the eyes of Kaysen, an adjunct professor of Global Health and a professor of Psychiatry. Kaysen worked with colleagues from Johns Hopkins University to adapt a treatment called cognitive processing therapy—which teaches people "the skill of thinking differently about your thinking," she says. "It's a little like doing yoga for your brain."

Survivors of sexual violence often second-guess and blame themselves, Kaysen says. Cognitive processing therapy helps them address their emotions, look at the trauma realistically, and realize they

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Debra Kaysen

Photo: Jeff Hodson



times more than cancer,” says Jürgen Unützer, professor and chair in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and adjunct professor of Global Health and Health Services.

Unützer explains that while cancer and heart disease are often devastating, they typically occur later in life. On the other hand, he says, “Most people who have mental health or substance abuse problems develop them in late adolescence or early adulthood. If you don’t take care of it, it basically disables you for the rest of your life. It can get in the way of your being a mother, a safe driver, or taking medication for an infectious disease.”

Recognition of mental health issues as a global problem has increased dramatically over the last decade.

Greater public awareness, the World Health Organization says, is due in part to the “disability-adjusted life year” metric developed in 1990 that measures the gap between current health status and an ideal one where the entire population lives to an advanced age free of disease or disability. Mental health is one of many factors used.

Other possible reasons for increased mental health awareness include rapid urbanization, which is associated with homelessness, poverty, overcrowding, and other ills considered risk factors for mental disorders.

“I think we’ve made the case this is a big problem,” Unützer says. “Now, what can we do about it?”

The next step is better treatment. “With some of the mental disorders, you can apply a curative treatment,” Unützer says. “Depression can completely go away if treated well. If it really drives 10 percent of all disability and if we could make it go away, that would be dramatic.”

One successful example is Professor Debra Kaysen’s therapy work in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where



Photos: Jeff Hodson

Jürgen Unützer, Deepa Rao

women are traumatized from domestic violence and rape (sidebar, page 1).

The Global Mental Health Program seeks philanthropic support for faculty, pilot research projects, and student scholarships and fellowships. Unützer, Rao, and their colleagues are conducting research and training to address gaps in global mental health interventions.

Among their projects:

- Seeking to improve depression care in South India at the same time patients receive diabetes and heart care. About 20 percent of Indians with diabetes also have depression. “Depression keeps them from optimally engaging not only in treatment but in exercise and proper diet,” Rao says.
- Supporting grants to provide depression treatment in general clinics in low-resource countries, including collaboration with the University of Nairobi in Kenya.
- Introducing traditional African faith healers to Western medical practice.
- Working with HIV-infected, African-born women in Seattle, Chicago, and Birmingham. Rao says this “global-to-local” approach uses a peer-led workshop that teaches skills on how to cope with stigma while learning techniques for relaxation.

“Human beings are complicated,” Rao says. “Developing a pill is only useful when a person will take it. When they do not, we need to think inter-disciplinarily and about contextual barriers, mental health, relationships, family, society, and culture.”

Healing Survivors of Sexual Violence in the Congo

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didn’t have control over the event. Dr. Judy Bass at Johns Hopkins, Kaysen, and colleagues conducted a randomized trial in 15 villages of the Congo, where nearly 40 percent of women have experienced sexual violence. The country has few mental-health services.

Treatment was brief—only 12 visits, administered by Congolese counselors. The results were dramatic. Six months later, only nine percent of those who went through the

therapy in groups still experienced depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress syndrome, compared to 42 percent in the control group, whose participants received individual support. Results were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

“It’s good evidence for possible sustainability,” Kaysen says. “We’re hoping for funding to scale it up in the eastern region. The majority of rapes occur there.”

SPH Making an Impact



Photo: Courtesy of President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition

Developing Farm-to-Fork Report

Improving our food systems can help support good health and nutrition, says a new report for the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition, written by SPH researchers. "Healthy Nutrition: From Farm to Fork" gives an overview of the links between public health and the food system—from the way we grow and harvest food to how we sell and consume it. It explores the growing problem of antibiotic use for meat and poultry production and explains how highly processed foods lose important vitamins during refining. The report also offers tips for consumers to support a healthier system: Know your farmer, eat seasonally or buy frozen, avoid foods with too much pesticide residue, and reduce food waste. The report was co-authored by MPH student Jamie Bachaus (Nutritional Sciences) and Assistant Professor Jennifer Otten (Health Services).

Lobbying State Lawmakers on E-cigarettes

Several SPH students, staff, and faculty compiled research on e-cigarettes for Washington state lawmakers as they began debating a measure to tax and restrict the devices. E-cigarettes contain potentially harmful chemicals and their use tripled among high school students between 2011 and 2013, according to a white paper drafted by the SPH team. Graduate students from the Community-Oriented Public Health Practice program traveled to Olympia to lobby for e-cigarette regulations, while other SPH staff and faculty organized expert testimony for a House committee hearing on the bill. The bill was introduced by State Rep. Gerry Pollet, D-Seattle, clinical instructor in Health Services. Parts of the bill passed two House committees and discussion of the measure continues.

Raising Funds for Earthquake Survivors

SPH graduate students from Nepal raised nearly \$17,000 for relief efforts in the wake of the devastating earthquakes there. "Every penny is worth it," says Archana Shrestha (PhD,

Photo: Natalie Hawwa/USAID



Epidemiology 2015). She noted the cost of a typical meal in Nepal is only 20 cents. Shrestha and other members of the UW Nepalese Student Association solicited money for food, shelter, and supplies. "I think this is going to fundamentally change our careers in many ways because the priorities have changed," said Biraj Karmacharya (PhD, Epidemiology 2015), who is pursuing an MPH in Global Health.

Changing a Policy on Disability Benefits

The Department of Veterans Affairs now says U.S. Air Force reservists who became ill after being exposed to Agent Orange residue should be eligible for disability benefits. The reversal in policy was announced in June and came after publication of an Institute of Medicine report co-authored by Professor John Kissel (Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences). The IOM report found that reservists would have been exposed to potentially harmful chemicals while they worked inside of C-123 aircraft previously used to spray herbicides during the Vietnam War. About 2,000 military personnel flew or worked in C-123 aircraft after the war. Before the IOM report, the VA had generally denied claims from reservists.

Influencing Voter Behavior

Two graduate students each completed five-month research projects to help King County keep people in better health and out of jail. The projects were the first domestic assignments under the newly expanded Strategic Analysis and Research Training program (START). MPH student Anne Althaus (Health Services) studied government-funded prevention initiatives to learn what factors led to their approval by voters. Her research will help the county prepare its proposal to voters to support early childhood investments. Doctoral student Phillip Hwang (Epidemiology) worked on the Familiar Faces project, which aims to reduce recidivism. He researched how housing, medical coverage, mental illness, and substance abuse relate to incarceration.

Student Awards & Scholarships

Gilbert S. Omenn Award-Winners

The Omenn Award annually recognizes a master's and a PhD student for outstanding scholarship and commitment to public health.



Peter Cherutich (PhD, Global Health) is the first graduate of the new program in global health metrics and implementation science. He is a physician, founding chair of the Public Health Society of Kenya, and has led national HIV prevention efforts in Kenya's Ministry of Health. His research focused on increasing access to testing for sexual partners of people with HIV. He hopes to apply skills from his training to "provide innovative solutions to the emerging non-communicable disease burden" in Kenya.



Trevor Peckham earned two degrees: an MS in Environmental Health and a Master of Public Administration. His research looked at skin exposures to a chemical byproduct of combustion found in soil. His research includes recommendations to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that support a new formula to calculate the dangers from exposure. "There is particular concern that we're underestimating the risk for all chemicals that can be absorbed through skin from soil," he says.

These SPH fellowships, made possible by generous donations from friends and alumni, recognize academic merit and promise.

Grayston-Day Fellowship



Janeth Sanchez is interested in health care reform, cancer health disparities, and social inequalities. The incoming PhD student (Health Services) lives in Clint, TX, a small farming community where Hispanics make up half the population. She's been working with Hispanic and Native American populations as a National Outreach Network Community/Cancer Health Educator at the National Cancer Institute. Says Janeth, "The Grayston-Day Fellowship has made it possible for me to focus on my studies and to contribute to the body of scholarly work related to cancer health disparities and health equity without worrying about finding work outside the university."



SPH Endowed Fellowship

Monisha Sharma (PhD student, Epidemiology) focuses on evaluating strategies to expand HIV testing and links to treatment in sub-Saharan Africa. Before joining SPH, she worked at the Harvard School of Public Health, using mathematical models to investigate the cost effectiveness of cervical cancer prevention. She plans to use the endowed fellowship funds to travel to London's Imperial College to complete a two-week course on infectious disease modeling.

If you are interested in learning more about supporting our students, please contact Megan Ingram, 206-616-7197 or mkingram@uw.edu.

Magnuson Scholar Works With HIV-Positive Children

Established by the late U.S. Senator Warren G. Magnuson, this scholarship is awarded annually to an outstanding student from each Health Sciences school.



Anjali Wagner (PhD student, Epidemiology) is working to improve ways to find HIV-positive children in Kenya who slip through the cracks. About 60 percent of children who are living with HIV are undiagnosed. Anjali and her colleagues are trying to find them before they get so sick they can't be treated with

medicines. The CATCH (Counseling and Testing for Children at Home) project is part of the Kenya Research and Training Center, a collaboration of the UW and the University of Nairobi.

"Half of kids with untreated HIV will die by age two, and 80 percent of them will die by age five," Anjali says, "so it's really important to find them before they get sick. We start backwards, and find adults who are already in care for their own HIV infection and ask them if they have any kids who haven't been tested for HIV." The CATCH team has been able to talk with more than 22,000 HIV-infected adults and has offered testing to hundreds of families so far.

New Endowed Fellowship

Honoring Former SPH Dean Patricia Wahl

An endowed fellowship to support outstanding graduate students in Biostatistics has been created in honor of former Dean Patricia Wahl, who retired last year and is now dean emeritus and professor emeritus of Biostatistics. The endowment was spearheaded by Professors Thomas Fleming and Bruce Weir.

Wahl served as dean from 1999 to 2010 and was a professor of Biostatistics for 30 years. She was the School's fourth dean and the only woman to hold the position.

"The Patricia Wahl Endowed Fellowship in Biostatistics, through its recognition and financial assistance for outstanding graduate students, appropriately honors Professor Wahl's career dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities. Her career exemplifies the importance of increased leadership opportunities for women in public health," Fleming said.

Fellowship funds can be used to support any aspect of a student's educational costs. Initial donations were provided by Wahl's former faculty colleagues.

Wahl says she hopes the funds will be used flexibly to meet student needs as they arise—whether to keep a student in school, for travel expenses to attend meetings, or to recruit talented students to the top-ranked Biostatistics program. Wahl knows clearly the many possibilities. She served as the department's graduate program director for three years after stepping down as dean.

"That's one thing I really miss—working with students," she said. "The students we get are outstanding. There's a great collegiality."

Wahl was a UW computer systems programmer when her work left an impression on Richard Kronmal, professor of Biostatistics.

Kronmal encouraged her to enroll in the UW's Biostatistics graduate study program. That eventually led to teaching and a PhD. She was recruited as associate dean in 1985 by then Dean Gilbert S. Omenn and was appointed acting dean in 1997 when Omenn left for the University of Michigan.

Two of her notable accomplishments were creating a Department of Global Health with the School of Medicine in 2007, funded by a \$10 million startup grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and launching the innovative Community-Oriented Public Health Practice program, which features problem-based learning focused on solving real public health problems.

Wahl said she's been fortunate to spend most of her professional career at the School. "None of my steps has been particularly planned or particularly sought after," she said in a 2008 interview. "It's just been wonderful people all along the way who have opened the doors."

For more information, or to make a donation, contact Megan Ingram, 206-616-7197 or mkingram@uw.edu.



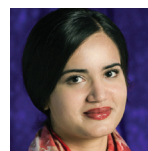
Patricia Wahl

UW President's Medals Awarded to Two SPH Students



Undergraduate **Ashley Bobman** (Public Health major, Nutritional Sciences minor) was awarded the UW Sophomore President's Medal for having the highest academic standing in her class. Ashley,

who recently completed her junior year, was also recognized for her interdisciplinary work and extracurricular activities. She volunteers 10 hours a week and is active in the Sephardic Studies Program. Her great-grandfather, Albert Levy, was a prominent writer in Ladino, a dying language that Ashley is working to preserve.



Graduating senior **Sanjit Kaur** (Public Health major, Nutritional Sciences minor) was one of two winners of the UW President's Medal for her outstanding academic performance. Each year the UW recognizes

two graduating seniors at the top of their class—one who has completed three-quarters of his or her work at the UW and another who transferred from a community college. Sanjit spent two years at Seattle Central College before transferring to the UW. Public health appealed to her because "you get the chance to improve more lives and communities."

News Briefs

Climate Bike Ride Raises \$25,000

Thanks to the inspired idea of Dean's Council member Ron Sher, a School of Public Health team netted \$25,000 from pedaling in the five-day Climate Ride along the California coast. The funds will benefit the new Center for Health and the Global Environment (CHANGE), which focuses on the health risks of global environmental change. Team members: top row (l-r): George Whyel, Dale Sperling, Howard Frumkin, Andy Dannenberg; bottom row: Bill Ptacek, Ron Sher



Photo: Courtesy of Howard Frumkin

Seed Funds Help Build a New Outpatient Health Center in Ethiopia

Last summer, the opening of a comprehensive outpatient center in Ethiopia's historic town of Gondar was heralded as a beacon of a stronger healthcare system in East Africa.

The clinic is designed to accommodate 370,000 patient visits and train 285 healthcare students every year—a size and scope unprecedented in Ethiopia. “We couldn't have built this center without the University of Washington,” said Mengesha Admassu, president of the University of Gondar.

UW's International Training and Education Center for Health (I-TECH) has spent many years building the capacity

of health workers in Ethiopia. However, it was Seattle businessman and UW supporter Brooks Simpson who got the project rolling. Simpson had heard a presentation from Dr. King Holmes, UW professor of medicine and global health, on how donor seed money in Kenya got the CDC to invest in a network of HIV/AIDS clinics. Simpson, owner of Bellevue-based Pacific Rim Medical Systems, which distributes defibrillators, was interested in donating money for another such project. Because of I-TECH's proven work in Ethiopia, the University of Gondar was chosen as the site.

Ann Downer Wins UW Award for Contributions To Lifelong Learning



Ann Downer

Ann Downer, founding director of the International Training and Education Center for Health (I-TECH), received the UW's 2015 Award for Distinguished Contributions to Lifelong Learning Award. She was honored at the UW's annual Awards of Excellence ceremony June 11. Interim UW President Ana Mari Cauce and Interim Provost Jerry Baldasty cited Downer's “amazing ability to engage a huge team... and dozens of global academic and professional education systems to have an enormous impact on utilizing eLearning to save the lives of millions of people with HIV infection.” I-TECH works with local ministries, universities, and other agencies in more than 20 countries to develop a skilled health workforce.

Graduation Address From Gates CEO



Sue Desmond-Hellmann

Set ambitious goals, then exceed them, make problems disappear by finding their solutions, then move on to the next public health problem and eradicate it.

Be boundless. That was the message from Sue Desmond-Hellmann in her keynote address to this year's SPH graduates in June. Dr. Desmond-Hellman, CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is the first physician to lead that organization. (Her advice was taken to heart immediately by one graduate who, after hearing the speech, decided to enter a two-year CDC program to which she had been accepted, although its location in Alaska had initially given her pause.) Public health is central to creating a more equitable world—go forth and create that world, urged Dr. Desmond-Hellmann. “You are entering a field of life-saving consequence, when we know that big victories are possible.”

Alumni

First All-SPH Reunion, Celebrating the School's 45th Anniversary

In April, more than 120 alumni and faculty gathered to celebrate the School's 45th anniversary. Alumni spanning 66 years—the classes of 1949 to 2014—talked, nibbled, and sipped at Touchdown Terrace in Husky Stadium. Ron Sims, chair of the Washington Health Benefits Exchange

Board, former King County Executive, and current Chair of the SPH Dean's Council, delivered a compelling keynote address on the necessity of public health education and practice in the 21st century. Stay tuned for the reunion in 2020, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of SPH!



Photos: Anna Swan

Reunion attendees: (l-r) **Barbara Silva Freeman** BS 1970; keynote speaker **The Honorable Ron Sims**; **Misganaye Demeke** BA 2013; **Svanhild Swasand Castner** BA 1981; **Russell Castner** BS 1971, DDS 1975; **Danielle Malins** MHA 2014; **Stacy Crim** MHA 2014

Alumni Updates

Jose Carmona, Public Health Major 2015, has joined the Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (DEOHS) as a program assistant.

Lee Thornhill, MHA 2014, recently joined Public Health – Seattle & King County's APDE unit (Assessment, Policy Development, and Evaluation) as a health reform evaluator and social research scientist.

Walter Allen Fink, MHA 2013, is now physician executive at Multicare Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup, WA.

Debra Fromholzer, eMHA 2011, has joined ProRie Advisory, LLC as a managing principal. ProRie consults with organizations on project portfolio management and business process transformation.

Janessa Graves, PhD 2011, Health Services; MPH 2008, DEOHS, appeared on the *Today Show* talking about treadmill injuries.

Tracy Hilliard, PhD 2010, Health Services; MPH 2003, Maternal and Child Health, was named one of 12 "Rising Stars" by the Northwest Asian Weekly Foundation. Tracy is director of Data Integrity for Seattle's Human Services department.

Alex Shirreffs, MPH 2010, Health Services, won the 2015 Mayor's Award for Distinguished National Service in Philadelphia. She works in hepatitis awareness issues.

Bernice Dahn, MPH 2005, Health Services, was appointed Minister of Health for Liberia.

James Kile, MPH 2004, Health Services, is now a public health veterinarian at the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Michael Brumage, MPH 2003, Epidemiology, will begin as executive director and health officer for Kanawha-Charleston Health Department in West Virginia in August. His previous position was deputy commander of a U.S. Army health clinic in Japan.

Bernice Hecker, MHA 2003, retired from her position as executive medical director, Medicare Parts A&B. She currently works as a consultant for governmental agencies and private clients.

Melinda Irwin, MPH 2001, Epidemiology, is associate professor of epidemiology at the Yale University School of Public Health and co-program leader of the Cancer Prevention and Control Research Program at Yale Cancer Center.

Jeff Henderson, MPH 1999, Health Services, founded the Black Hills Center for American Indian Health, a community-based, research-intensive nonprofit working to enhance the wellness of American Indians and Alaska Natives throughout North America.



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New Faculty



Joseph Dieleman, *Assistant Professor, Global Health*—Dr. Dieleman focuses on tracking development

assistance, health spending by disease, and government health spending. He also works on non-communicable diseases and understanding U.S. trends in women's life expectancy.



Paul Drain, *Assistant Professor, Global Health*—

Dr. Drain focuses on diagnostic point-of-care tests and clinic-based screening for tuberculosis and HIV in resource-limited settings.



Brandon Guthrie, *Assistant Professor in Global Health and Epidemiology*—Dr. Guthrie's research interests focus on

improving care among people living with HIV. His NIH-funded research projects, based in Nairobi, Kenya, evaluate ways to improve retention in HIV/AIDS care, expedite the start of treatment, and reduce mortality.



Anjum Hajat, *Acting Assistant Professor, Epidemiology*—Dr. Hajat's research involves the social

and environment stresses that particularly affect disadvantaged groups and how these stresses affect cardiovascular disease.



Simon Hay, *Professor, Global Health*—Dr. Hay seeks to improve control of infectious diseases, especially malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis.

He is co-founder of the Malaria Atlas Project, which generates innovative ways to map malaria risk.



Cynthia LeRouge, *Associate Professor, Health Services*—Dr. LeRouge's research interests are telemedicine,

consumer health and public health information systems, and health IT project management.



Elaine Nsoesie, *Assistant Professor, Global Health*—Dr. Nsoesie's research areas of focus are statistical and

computational modeling, and the use of novel technologies and data streams for global health.



Edwin Wong, *Research Assistant Professor, Health Services*—Dr. Wong is a health economist focusing

on the key factors influencing the health care choices of veterans enrolled in the Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care System, notably dual use of VA and non-VA care.



Suzanne Wood, *Assistant Professor, Health Services*—Dr. Wood's areas of expertise are international business and strategy, management theory

and practice, strategic management, and program and process evaluation.