

ASAP Newsletter



The Philadelphia Chapter of the American Statistical Association

January 2012

<http://www.amstatphilly.org/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
January 27	Mid-Winter Gathering	Sedgeley Club (Boathouse Row)
April 4	Delaware Valley Science Fair	Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, PA
TBD	Spring Course	TBD
April 18	Univ. of Penn. Conference on Statistical Issues in Clinical Trials	University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
May 15-16	Intel Science and Engineering Fair	Pittsburgh, PA

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President's Corner

Dear Philadelphia Statistics Colleagues,

I wish you all a peaceful, healthy, and prosperous year. I look forward to working with you and my fellow officers to make our chapter thrive in the coming year.

Before we look to our year ahead, please allow me to thank Dr. Elizabeth Stuart, Associate Professor in Mental Health/Biostatistics at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, for an engaging Fall workshop on "Propensity Score Methods for Estimating Causal Effects." Her talk was informative and well received. A social mixer followed the talk, marking the second one that we have hosted. Our goal in this changing economic climate is to bring together statisticians from various sectors to foster new relationships, incubate new ideas, and tackle challenging problems.

Along these lines, Nancy Geller recently urged us (Amstat News, August 2011) to increase our visibility by wearing our identity as a discipline proudly, in both professional and social settings. She asked that we take advantage of opportunities to brag about the achievements of statistical colleagues, and when discussing new projects, that we point out the potential contributions statistics could make to the results.

Looking ahead, please join us for our highlight Mid-Winter Gathering on beautiful and historic Boathouse Row. The evening promises to bring together a lively group of statisticians, along with their significant others, for a fully catered evening of h'ordeuvres, a delicious gourmet dinner, light and entertaining discussion of data and educational policy, followed by our much anticipated signature bananas foster dessert. Mark your calendars for Friday, January 27, 2012, for this fun event. Look for more information in this issue of our newsletter, including information on our speaker, Distinguished Research Scientist and author Howard Wainer. Also provided is a link to the event registration, which is easy to use and facilitated by a secure internet site that provides the luxury of payment by credit card, Paypal, or Google Pay.

February launches the first annual ASA Statistical Practice Conference, aiming to bring together statistical practitioners, including data analysts, researchers and scientists, who engage in the application of statistics to solve real-world problems on a daily basis. The conference will take place February 16-18 in sunny Orlando and provides an opportunity to learn about current statistical methods and best practices in design, analysis, programming and consulting. I hope to see you there!

Spring and Summer Philadelphia Chapter workshops promise to continue our tradition of offering outstanding topics and speakers. We have secured another ASA Traveling Course for the Spring (information on p. 4). Our summer topic will relate to Data Safety Monitoring Boards (DSMBs), which are independent groups of people that continuously monitor data from various aspects of clinical trials and guide the clinical trial teams in moving forward with or stopping the trials. In recent years, the number of clinical trials opting for, or required to have, a DSMB has been increasing for reasons related to patient safety concerns, increased awareness among the trial subjects, and many others. We hope that you are able to attend these interactive and valuable workshops, as they are excellent opportunities to network with local colleagues and to keep abreast of current statistical topics, in a variety of local venues at a minimal cost.

~Alex Hanlon

ASAP MID-WINTER GATHERING

Friday, January 27, 2012 - The Sedgeley Club (Boathouse Row)

- Speaker:** Howard Wainer, PhD
Topic: Uneducated Guesses: Three examples of how mistreating missing data yields misguided educational policy
- Date:** Friday, January 27, 2012
Time: 6:30 Appetizers
7:30 Dinner
8:30 Speaker Presentation
- Location:** The Sedgeley Club (Boathouse Row)
15 Boathouse Row
Philadelphia, PA 19130
- Cost:** \$65/\$40/\$25 for couples/individuals/students (includes catered meal, wine, beer)
Registration: <http://asapwinter2012meeting.eventbrite.com/>

The speaker is **Howard Wainer, PhD**, a Distinguished Research Scientist at the National Board of Medical Examiners and Professor (adjunct) of Statistics at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

The title of his presentation is "**Uneducated Guesses: Three examples of how mistreating missing data yields misguided educational policy.**"

In his talk, he will describe three educational proposals that only make sense if you say them fast. In each case, their validity relies strongly on the data that are missing to have a particular structure. And, in each case, we can dismiss that assumed missing data structure. The three proposals examined are:

1. Make college entrance exams optional,
2. Allow students to choose which test items they will answer, and
3. Evaluate teachers on the gains their students show in test scores.

There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion as well.

Spouses and significant others are welcome. The talk is non-technical.

Dr. Wainer received his Ph. D. from Princeton University in 1968. After serving on the faculty of the University of Chicago, a period at the Bureau of Social Science Research during the Carter Administration, and 21 years as Principal Research Scientist in the Research Statistics Group at Educational Testing Service, he is now Distinguished Research Scientist at the National Board of Medical Examiners and Professor (adjunct) of Statistics at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Wainer has a long-standing interest in the use of graphical methods for data analysis and communication, robust statistical methodology, and the development and application of generalizations of item response theory. Since 1990 he has written a popular column on data visualization in the statistics magazine *Chance*. His latest book *Uneducated Guesses Using*

Evidence to Uncover Misguided Education Policies (Princeton University Press) was published in September 2011.

Dr. Wainer was elected a Fellow in the American Statistical Association in 1985 and a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association in 2009. He has received numerous other awards. In addition to his professional accomplishments, he also swam the English Channel.

SPRING COURSE

Applied Survival Analysis Dr. Susanne May University of Washington Date and Place to be Determined

Once again we are fortunate to have been awarded one of the ASA Council of Chapters Traveling courses. This year there were 19 applications from 20 Chapters, the most ever! The ASA reviewed the applications, any history of prior courses, and the budget and offered 15 Chapters an opportunity for a course. Five applications (including ASAP) selected Applied Survival Analysis as their first or second choice; four courses will be taught.

Watch your e-mail for information on the date and place. We will send out an announcement with the date as soon as that has been arranged with the speaker. Dr. Susanne May is a co-author, with Drs. David W. Hosmer and Stanley Lemeshow, of the second edition of the book Applied Survival Analysis: Regression Modeling of Time to Event Data, published by Wiley.

Educational Outreach Officer

We are very pleased to welcome **Michael Posner**, Associate Professor of Statistics at Villanova University, who joins us as the Educational Outreach Officer. Michael holds a B.A. in Statistics and Economics from the University of Rochester, an M.S. in Statistics from Carnegie Mellon University, and Ph.D. in Biostatistics from Boston University. His publications and research span the fields of statistics education research, biostatistics, health care research, statistics and the law, educational research, and analysis of observational studies.

Dr. Posner is on the Executive Committee of the Section on Statistics Education for the American Statistical Association (ASA) and is the past-chair of the Special Interest Group of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) for Statistics Education. He is also the Associate Director for Professional Development of the Consortium for the Advancement of Undergraduate Statistics Education (CAUSE) and was appointed to serve on the ASA Public Awareness Workgroup and the ASA/MAA Joint Committee on Undergraduate Statistics. Locally, he is an active member of the Philadelphia Area Statistics Teachers Alliance (PASTA) and the Collaborative Mathematics Education Research Group (CoMERG).

If you have any ideas on how to help educate the local community, please contact him at michael.posner@villanova.edu.

University of Pennsylvania Annual Conference on Statistical Issues in Clinical Trials

Emerging Statistical Issues in Biomarker Validation for Clinical Trials.

April 18, 2012

University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine
Biomedical Research Building Auditorium
421 Curie Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19104

TENTATIVE AGENDA

SCOPE/PROMISE	Speakers	Affiliation
Biomarkers and surrogate end points: The challenges of statistical validation (including overview of design options)	Daniel J. Sargent	Mayo Clinic
The Omics of biomarker validation: Statistical performance and clinical utility	Lisa McShane	NIH/NCI
VALIDATION		
Assessment of biomarker assay and biomarker performance. When are biomarkers ready for prime time?	Gene Pennello	FDA
Evaluating prognostic accuracy of biomarkers in nested case-control studies	Tianxi Cai	Harvard University
Testing the incremental predictive accuracy of new markers.	Colin Begg	Memorial Sloan-Kettering
Quantification of treatment effect explained by markers in the presence of measurement error; Decomposition of biomarker impact and Rx effect.	Yongming Qu	Ely Lilly
Importance of calibrating new biomarkers against imperfect gold standards	Rebecca Betensky	Harvard University
Partial List of Panel Members	Dave DeMets Victor De Gruttola Phyllis Gimotty Lisa LaVange	University of Minnesota Harvard University University of Pennsylvania FDA

For more information, please visit

<http://www.cceb.med.upenn.edu/biostat/conferences/ClinTrials12/> or contact Donna Zikowitz at zikowitz@upenn.edu or (215) 573-2728. Registration deadline is April 4.

Science Fair Judges

Delaware Valley Science Fair

Judging day for the 2012 Delaware Valley Science Fairs (DVSF) will be **Wednesday, April 4th, 2012 at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, PA**. I hope your schedule will allow you to participate. Registration is open through our website at www.dvsf.org. All correspondence will be done through e-mail, so it is crucial that we have your correct e-mail address. Please 'spread the word' to all your colleagues about this exciting and worthwhile program. Additional information is posted on our website.

John Disston
Director of Judging

Henry Disston
President and Director
Delaware Valley Science Fairs

The ASAP chapter has a long history of judging at the fair and presenting cash awards to those projects that demonstrate excellent use of experimental design principles and/or sound inferential statistical analysis. We give out three awards: 6th - 8th grade, 9th - 10th grade, and 11th - 12th grade. The ASAP awards are additional, 'special' awards for which **every** project in the fair is eligible. That meant the team of ASAP judges had to cover a total of almost 1,000 projects in 2011.

In 2012, the Intel International Fair will be held in Pittsburgh, so the proximity of that is likely to lead to further growth in the DVSF. To give each project a chance of review for our awards, **we need more judges!** Please consider joining us this year - you'll find a day spent interacting with these smart young people truly rewarding and inspiring!

David Radley

Intel Science and Engineering Fair

On May 15-16, 2012, Pittsburgh will host the Intel Science and Engineering Fair, the world's largest international pre-college science competition which annually provides a forum for high-school students from more than 40 countries to showcase their independent research and compete for prizes and scholarships. <http://www.societyforscience.org/intelisef2012> Each year, millions of students compete in local and school-sponsored science fairs. The winners of these go on to participate in ISEF-affiliated regional and state fairs, from which the best are chosen to attend the ISEF. In our area, winners of the Delaware Valley Science Fair can enter their projects into the ISEF.

The Philadelphia Chapter has set a goal of contributing at least 10 qualified judges to this fair. If you have time to volunteer May 15th (afternoon) to May 16th (evening) to serve as a judge at this very exciting and unique international science fair and provide strong representation for our Chapter, please contact Dennis Cosmatos (our Council of Chapter Representative at dennis.cosmatos@hotmail.com or dcosmatos@rpsweb.com). Please advise him of your interest and include a brief bio showing your education and experience in the field of statistics. Arrangements to carpool and information on housing arrangement will be passed on once we know who will be attending. Some costs for travel to Pittsburgh may be reimbursed by ASA.

JOB OPENING

Director and US Head of Biostatistics & Statistical Programming

RPS Inc.

Ft. Washington, PA

www.rpsweb.com

This is a key position for RPS, heading the entire Biostatistics and Programming Group in the US and reporting to Dennis Cosmatos, Dr.P.H., the VP and Global head of these functions.

Duties will include:

1. Management of Biostatistical and Programming resources in the US and ensuring every RPS project is staffed to fulfill the needs of that project and stays within the timelines and budget of the project.
2. Recruitment, development and mentoring of staff to contribute to planned growth of this Group with an aim to building a recognized level of statistical expertise and operational efficiency.
3. Build alignment with other disciplines (e.g., data management, clinical, medical writing) to ensure statistical activities are linked with deliverables timelines and aim at minimizing the time between database lock and completion of statistical report.
4. Must have extensive experience with SAPs, CDISC and STDM guidelines, AdAM dataset structure, SAS programming guidelines and validation procedures, programming and validation of analysis methods, and direction of all data reporting activities.
5. Evidence of exceptional communication skills that will prepare them for bid defenses and internal communications. Recent publications and presentations at industry meetings (e.g., JSM, DIA, etc.) would be a plus.

Education and Experience:

A Ph.D., Dr.P.H., Sc.D. or comparable doctorate in Statistics or Biostatistics plus at least five (5) years of experience, showing increasing responsibility, in a pharmaceutical or CRO setting are required. Direct management experience a plus.

To be confidentially considered for this position, please submit your resume with salary expectations to James Doyle, RPS Human Resources at jdoyle@rpsweb.com.
Or call Jim at 215-540-0700 x3320 for more information

ASAP Officers, 2011 – 2012

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