Welcome to the Department of Epidemiology at the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work, where science meets with community partnership in order to create an optimal environment for students’ learning.

Our students are enrolled in various programs at the Department of Epidemiology, where they learn essential skills for succeeding in the public health careers of the 21st Century while conducting epidemiologic research locally, nationally and internationally.

Wasim Maziak, M.D., Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Epidemiology
Ph.D. candidate Melissa Ward-Peterson was accepted into the FIU Presidential Leadership Program. It is the inaugural year of this competitive program.

Soumyadeep Mukherjee, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Epidemiology, was an active participant and one of the top three individual fundraisers (http://afsph.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donordrive.participantList&eventID=3651) for the FIU Out of the Darkness Campus Walk, an endeavor of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The walk, that took place on April 9, was a phenomenal success with a great turnout of over 300 walkers and more than $15,000 (and still counting) raised. For his involvement and leadership activities on campus, Soumyadeep was one of the students invited by the Council for Student Organizations FIU, for a dinner hosted by FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg on Feb. 18, 2016 at the Reagan House.

Soumyadeep was also awarded FIU’s Dissertation Year Fellowship award from the University Graduate school.


Ph.D. candidate Raed Bahelah was selected for a summer Scholar Training Program at the Oklahoma Tobacco Research Center. Raed also has two abstracts accepted for poster presentation at the 2016 Epidemiology Congress of the Americas that will take place in Miami this summer: A systematic review of smoking patterns and nicotine dependence among rural to urban migrants and Early Symptoms of Nicotine Dependence Among Adolescent Waterpipe Smokers.

Raed was featured in Stempel News alongside Dr. Maziak for the study Early symptoms of Nicotine Dependence Among Adolescent Waterpipe Smokers, which was also published in Tobacco Control.

Raed received a UWS RRAC Scholarship award that is granted by the FIU Office of Donor Relations and Stewardship. This award provides $1,000 to cover part of tuition for fall and spring semesters.
Ph.D. graduate Diana Sheehan received the President's Worlds Ahead recognition during spring commencement. She successfully defended her dissertation for the Ph.D. in epidemiology.

Ph.D. candidate Dudith Pierre-Victor has been awarded the Cancer Prevention Fellowship by the National Cancer Institute. The fellowship program starts in June.

Ph.D. candidate Ziyad Ben Taleb was awarded the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work's Path Travel Award in March.

Ph.D. student Adriana Jimenez will be presenting two posters at the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) spring 2016 meeting in Atlanta in May. The posters are: Barriers to Implement Prevention Strategies for Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI) and Citrobacter freundii blaKPC Producer Outbreak at a Tertiary Acute Care Facility in Miami, FL.

Adriana also had one of her abstracts accepted for poster presentation at the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology 2016 conference taking place in Charlotte, North Carolina this June: Hospital Onset LabID MRSA Bacteremia Associated Factors—A Case Control Study.


Ph.D. student, Daniel Mauck had a poster abstract accepted to the epidemiology congress of the Americas conference in June: Racial/ethnic disparities in linkage to HIV care, Florida, 2014.

In March, Ph.D. candidate Kelly Winter was hired in a permanent full-time federal position as a health scientist in the Travelers’ Health Branch of the Division of Global Migration and Quarantine at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

M.P.H. graduate Nicole Castillo got recruited by the Florida Department of Public Health for the position of the biological scientist III in February.

Ph.D. student Olatokunbo Osibogun's letter to the editor, Literature review and Meta-analysis on Micronutrient Fortified Condiments and Noodles: Reduction of Anemia in Children and Adults, has been accepted and published in Nutrients. Dr. Purnima Madhivanan is a co-author.

M.P.H. student, Vanessa Ayala, won first place for her poster presentation entitled; "Linkage to Care and HIV positive individuals with a correctional facility: The Florida Cohort Study" at the Southern HIV & Alcohol Research Consortium (SHARC) conference which took place at FIU May 18, 2016.
**Departmental Achievements**

**Faculty Achievements**

**Dr. Wasim Maziak**, professor and chair of the Department of Epidemiology will be giving the key address at this year’s NIH (NIDA) international conference forum on Waterpipe Tobacco Globalization and Health Consequences in June. He will be speaking about *The Waterpipe: An Emerging Threat to Global Public Health.*

Dr. Maziak presented two key addresses as part of an FDA-organized public workshop on waterpipe smoking in March: *The Waterpipe: Beginning, Spread, Health Effects, Dependence and Policy* and *Dependence in Waterpipe Smokers*. The event lectures can be found at [http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/NewsEvents/ucm480233.htm](http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/NewsEvents/ucm480233.htm).

The Syrian American Medical Society education committee presented Dr. Maziak with the Researcher of the Year Award, which he received at the SAMS national meeting in Orlando this past February.

**Dr. Miguel Ángel Cano**, assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology was selected for the 2016 NIDA Diversity Scholars Network. He was also selected for the FIU Presidential Leadership Program.


**Dr. Mary Jo Trepka** gave a presentation on *Transmission of HIV from mothers to infants—why is it still occurring in Florida?* on March 17 at the University of South Florida Center for HIV Education and Research Webinar. She also presented on *Linkage to HIV care in Florida and Miami-Dade County* at the Miami-Dade County HIV/AIDS Partnership on Jan. 28.
Prajakta Adsul, M.B.B.S., M.P.H., Ph.D.

Prajakta Adsul was competitively selected as a Cancer Prevention Fellow for 2016 at the National Cancer Institute. The goal of the Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program is to provide a strong foundation for scientists and clinicians to train in the field of cancer prevention and control. The fellowship is multidisciplinary in nature and structured to offer individuals comprehensive training in the field of cancer prevention while providing up to four years of financial support.

Currently, Adsul is a Global Health Equity Scholar for 2015-16 and is funded by the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health. As a postdoctoral research associate with the Department of Epidemiology at FIU, she works under the mentorship of Dr. Purnima Madhivanan and is based in India at the Public Health Research Institute of India located in Mysore. The goal of her current project is to explore the barriers to cervical cancer screening among under-served women using the principles of community based participatory research. She has also conducted a pilot study to assess the prevalence of HPV DNA among the rural and tribal women around Mysore.

Project PantherLife (Learning is for Everyone) is a collaboration between Miami-Dade County Public Schools and FIU to provide students with Intellectual Disabilities with a comprehensive postsecondary training through a well-planned, structured and individualized curriculum as well as related community experiences focusing on academics, social activities, employment and independent living.

Dr. Purnima Madhivanan has served as a Faculty Advisor for the last three years to students in the program. Faculty advisors were honored on April 21 at the PantherLife Appreciation Luncheon.

Top row: Dr. Thomas Reio, Dr. Judith Bernier, Dr. Hector Huerta, Amanda Giust (Program Manager)
Bottom row: Dr. Angela Salmon, Dr. Amy Paul-Ward, Eva Frank, Dr. Purnima Madhivanan


Recent Faculty & Student Publications
Spring 2016


Departmental Activities

The early 1980s marked the beginning of a monumental effort by Miami-Dade County to save Biscayne Bay. At that time, the Bay was suffering from pollution and its marine environment was in steep decline. Baynanza was created as part of a larger effort to save the Bay, and it has become a celebration of Biscayne Bay and its significance as one of the most important ecological systems in South Florida.

While Baynanza includes more than 25 great events throughout March and April, the event that has become nearly synonymous with this celebration is the Biscayne Bay Cleanup Day. This year, it took place April 16. FIU Stempel College faculty members and students—with families—volunteered at the Deering Estate, which was one of the clean-up sites. It was a wonderful opportunity for faculty and students to spend time together while contributing to our local community!

M.P.H. students majoring in epidemiology, Brionna Powell and Ana Zegarra, gave two of the FIU public health trainee presentations. Brionna Powell presented on Acute Hepatitis B in Broward County: An Epidemiology Approach, as a result of her practicum conducted at the Florida Department of Health in Broward County. Ana Zegarra presented on Salmonella Trends in Collier County. She has since accepted a position at the Florida Department of Health in Collier County, as a result of her practicum.

Dr. Vukosava Pekovic, M.P.H. Program Director and SPHA faculty advisor, served as an abstract reviewer and member of the regional planning committee.
Students & Faculty

Ph.D. students are seen at the Ph.D. annual meeting with Dr. Maziak and Dr. Madhivanan, which was held on Jan 11. Students gave feedback on their progress in the program and suggested improvements.

Faculty and students attend a departmental workshop seminar: A career development panel: with Drs. Fennie, Maziak and Trepka.

Epidemiology students and faculty encourage others to incorporate the use of stairs in their daily activities.
Departmental Activities

Research in Progress
This is a college-wide monthly seminar, where Ph.D. students and faculty discuss research and grant ideas in order to help faculty and students develop and refine their research proposals as well as create opportunities for collaborative research.

Journal Club
In this monthly meeting, Ph.D. students and faculty discuss and critically evaluate an original research article in epidemiology from a peer-reviewed journal. The purpose is to encourage students to think more about the applied aspect of research methods and how they can be adapted to deal with different research questions or contexts.

Readings in Epidemiology
This monthly seminar is devoted to the discussion of seminal theoretical or conceptual articles in epidemiology. Ph.D. students work with their selected faculty mentors to highlight and discuss the main topics of each of these papers.

Departmental Facebook Page
Students and faculty have created an unofficial Facebook page Epidemiology-Florida International University with the purpose of sharing information, opinions and opportunities related to the department and the discipline in general.

Robert Stempel Honorary Lecture in Epidemiology
This lecture series aims to honor the memory of the late Dr. Robert Stempel, who helped develop most of the courses at the Department of Epidemiology at FIU, by bringing top scholars to speak at the College.

Epidemiology Innovative Methodology Seminar
This seminar series aims to bring specialists in epidemiology to share their knowledge and skills in modern and innovative research methods with our students and faculty.

Pizza Friday
Every 4th Friday of each month is Pizza Friday beginning at 1 p.m. in the main department area.

New Departmental Activity
This Fall 2015 semester, the Epi steps up initiative was born. It encourages the use of stairs daily in our daily activities.
Students & Faculty

M.P.H.

Nyia Garrison
Mairyn Piloto
Hector Perez-Gilbe
Darryl Pronty
Christina Mcdonald
Matogoma Toure
Lounide Toussaint
Abel Polanco
Michael Garrote
Jennifer Centeno
Miguel Leon
Alissa Brown
Tuyet Huynh
Rafael Mendoza
John O’Mara
Sandra Cinor
Cynthia Goldberg
Kimesha Norris
Kasheta Mundy
Dilser Ayala
Krystina Pena
Gabriella Verde
Maithri Prabhakar
Kimberely Colon
Vanessa Landis
Prasad Bhoite
Srikanth Masham
Mahwish Aurangzeb
Ifedolapo Aderibigbe
Carmen Perez Valenzuela
Shasank Chennupati
Sharon Michael
Emily Davenport
Ruth Kallay
Andrew Seraphin

Ph.D.

Ziyad Ben Taleb
Isabel Griffin
Catherina Chang-Martinez
Alana Barbara Pugliese
Rui Duan
Craig Garmendia
Raed Bahelah
Janelle Taveras
Christyl Dawson
Khaleeq Lufti
Abraham Mengist
Soumyadeep Mukherjee
Kristopher Myers
Melissa Ward-Peterson
Dudith Pierre-Victor
Danielle Quesada
Alnecia Rumps
Vincy Samuel
Adriana Jimenez
Stephen Lynn White
Meredith Wilcox
Kelly Winter
Rehab Auf
Mariano Kanamori-Cruzada
Camille Moreno
Olatokunbo Osibogun
Daniel Mauck

Faculty

Nasar Ahmed, Ph.D.
Miguel Cano, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Kristopher Fennie, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.S.
Erica Gollub, Dr.P.H.
Gladys Ibanez, Ph.D.
Purnima Madhivanan, Ph.D., M.B.B.S.
Wasim Maziak, M.D., Ph.D.
Vukosava Pekovic, M.D., Ph.D.
Mary Jo Trepka, M.D., M.S.P.H.
Complete your Master of Public Health in one year with our new accelerated track. This track is well suited for pre-med students and professionals looking to obtain a degree in less time.

Applicants to the M.P.H. program (EPI, HPDP, EOH, HPM) at or above the 75 percentile of GRE (in both verbal and quantitative) will be given an option to apply for the 1-year accelerated track at admission.

Applicants eligible for an exemption of GRE (e.g. U.S. Medical graduates) will be given the 1-year accelerated track option as well. Such requests will be evaluated by the admission committees for the final decision.

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Important Links
Areas of Study
stempel.fiu.edu/academics/epidemiology/areas-of-study

Admissions & Procedures
stempel.fiu.edu/students/admissions/

Graduate Calendar
gradschool.fiu.edu/current-students-calendar-deadlines.shtml