

WNAR 2021 Early Career Panel

DATE: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

TIME: 12:15PM-1:30PM

Organizer and Moderator

Ying Lu, Ph.D., Professor of Biomedical Data Science, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

Panel Members

Nebiyou Bekele, Ph.D., Vice President of Biostatistics and Clinical Data Management, Exelisis, San Mateo, CA, USA

Brad Biggerstaff, Ph.D., Mathematical Statistician and Team Leader, CDC/DVBD, Fort Collins, CO, USA

Chito Hernandez, Ph.D., Group Vice President, Data Science, Biomarin, San Francisco, CA, USA

Joan Hu, Ph.D., Professor of Statistics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada.

Karen Messer, Ph.D., Professor and Division Chief, University of California, San Diego, CA, USA

Megan Othus, Ph.D., Biostatistician and Professor, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, WA, USA.

Background

It is a tradition of WNAR annual meeting to have a New Investigators' Luncheon to provide a forum for new graduates to meet senior WNAR members for career discussions. Because we have a virtual meeting this year, we will not be able to organize a luncheon. Instead, we will have a panel discussion session at noon time. We also change the name from New Investigators' Luncheon to Early Career Panel to be more inclusive and reflect changes in our membership to include academia, government and industry.

Objectives

To provide a forum for open and informal dialog between young members who will graduate within a year or recently graduated within 3 years with senior members from academia, government and industry; to share career experience and lessons learned from the panelists; to answer questions of young members.

All registered attendees to the WNAR Annual Meeting will be able to join the session through WNAR Program. However, 20 early career members will be given the opportunities to directly dialog with the panel. If you are interested in dialog with panelists and haven't signed up, please email wnar@wnar.org with the subject title of "Join the Early Career Panel Discussion". You can also submit your questions to the panelists by emailing wnar@wnar.org with the subject title of "Questions to the Early Career Panel".

Introduction of Panelists

Dr. Nebiyou (Neby) Bekele: Vice President, Biostatistics and Clinical Data Management at Exelisis. He is responsible for Biostatistics, Statistical Programming, and Clinical Data Management. Neby joined Exelisis in September of 2020. Prior to joining Exelisis, held positions in both Industry (Lilly, Gilead) and Academia (M. D. Anderson Cancer Center) and has

120+ collaborative/methodological peer-reviewed manuscripts and book chapters. He has worked on a variety of areas including oncology, anti-viral therapeutics and cures, and various inflammatory diseases.

Neby earned his Ph.D. in statistics from Baylor University. Prior to studying statistics, he earned degrees in Economics (BA) Political Science (BA, MA), and Urban Planning (MCRP). Neby has an interest in exploring and understanding the intersection between critical thinking skills, communication skills, and foundations of clinical trial design.

Dr. Brad Biggerstaff: Research Mathematical Statistician and Statistics Team Lead in the Division of Vector-Borne Diseases, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Dr. Biggerstaff has been with CDC since 1997. Before this, he served as a US National Research Council/US National Institute of Standards and Technology Postdoctoral Associate, which he undertook after graduate studies at Colorado State University. He obtained his undergraduate degree in mathematics at the University of Michigan. At CDC, his principle duties and interests are in methods and application for vector-borne diseases, and he has worked on a variety of projects concerning West Nile, dengue, Japanese encephalitis, chikungunya, yellow fever, and Zika viral diseases, as well as bacterial diseases plague, Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and Q fever. He has also participated in outbreak-related studies for H1N1 influenza A and COVID-19. He has particular interest in estimation of risk of transmission of arboviruses via blood transfusion and tissue donation. Statistical research interests include estimation in pooled testing, meta-analysis, and diagnostic testing. He has served as an invited consultant to the World Health Organization on measuring effectiveness and impact of Japanese encephalitis vaccine and on targeting vaccination and post-licensure studies for the licensed dengue vaccine, and as an external reviewer for the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and the Medical Research Council of the United Kingdom.

Dr. Biggerstaff has served leadership roles in IBS/WNAR over years. He was elected president of IBS/WNAR for the 2012-2014 cycle, before which he was an elected Representative-at-Large on the WNAR Regional Board. He also served two terms on the WNAR Regional Advisory Board, served on the Local Organizing Committee for IBC 2016. He was elected and served as the IBS Secretary/Treasurer, 2017-2020.

Dr. Chito Hernandez: a life science executive and PhD statistician with extensive experience leading Data Science organizations. He is currently Group Vice President and Head of Data Science at BioMarin, a company that develops and commercializes innovative biopharmaceuticals for serious diseases and medical conditions. Chito is Founder and Senior Partner at FocusQ LLC, a statistical and management consulting firm based in California. He previously served as Vice President of Biometrics and Information Management for Elan Pharmaceuticals, a neuroscience-focused biotech, and as Vice President of Biometrics at Janssen Alzheimer Immunotherapy Research and Development, a J&J subsidiary. Chito's leadership experience spans data science, statistics, analytics, statistical programming, data management, regulatory filings, both research and development as well as medical affairs, and business development. He received his PhD from Arizona State University.

Dr. Joan Hu: Professor of Statistics at Simon Fraser University. She received her PhD in Statistics from University of Waterloo in 1995. Her recent statistical research focuses on modeling and analysis of data with complex structures.

Joan is currently the co-editor of *Statistics in Biosciences* (2020-present) and has served on several journal's editorial boards such as *Lifetime Data Analysis* (2010-2017, 2020-present). She has been an Elected Member of the International Statistical Institute since 2007 and was named a Fellow of the American Statistical Association in 2012. Dr. Hu is the 2021 Chair of WNAR Regional Advisory Board.

Dr. Karen Messer: Professor of Biostatistics at UCSD. Dr. Messer is Chief of the Division of Biostatistics & Bioinformatics in the new Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health at UCSD. She is the current chair of the BMRD (Biostatistics Methods Research and Design) study section, which is the main review panel for statistical methods in the NIH review system. She is director of biostatistics at UCSD Moores Cancer Center. She is active within the ASA, having served on several committees over the past 9 years. Dr Messer received the PhD in Mathematics (Statistics) from UCSD in 1985, and was on the Mathematics faculty briefly at UCLA and then in Mathematics at California State University Fullerton prior to joining UCSD as a collaborative biostatistician in the health sciences. Dr. Messer's current research interests are in post-selection inference and in causal inference, and her collaborative research interests include the epidemiology of tobacco control and drug development and clinical trials in oncology and in Alzheimer's Disease. Her proudest accomplishment is helping to start the thriving Biostatistics PhD and Master's programs at UCSD.

Dr. Megan Othus: Biostatistician and Professor, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Dr. Othus is the faculty statistician for the SWOG Cancer Research Network Leukemia and Rare Cancer Committees. In that role, she leads the design and analysis of the trials through the committees and the translational medicine projects associated with utilizing tumor and blood samples from the trials. Her research focuses on clinical trial design and statistical analysis techniques for clinical trial data. In addition, she is interested in research questions that use SWOG historical data to inform clinical practice and trial design.