

Master of Public Health Student Profiles 2009-2010

Name: Alberto Aguilera, alaguilera@ucdavis.edu

Degrees: B.S. - Health Science, Community Health, CSU, Fresno (2009)

Area of Emphasis: Nutrition

Graduate Advisor: Robert Bell, PhD



Background/Interests: Albert became interested in Public Health during his coursework at California State University, Fresno. He volunteered at several facilities aimed at serving individuals and families of low socio-economic status. In addition, he helped coordinate an annual children's health workshop at a local community center. This inspired him to conduct research on the Chicana/Mexican mothers' perception of healthy food for children under the age of ten. Albert's emphasis in Public Health is nutrition. He has a strong belief that nutrition education will play a major role in reducing chronic diseases and health costs in the future.

Name: Gabriela Alaniz, mgalaniz@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.A. – Communication Studies with Mass Communication emphasis, UCLA (2003). Minor – Spanish

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Marc Schenker, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests: As an undergraduate, Gabriela volunteered with the Latino Student Health Project in health fairs providing free healthcare to underserved populations. It was by working with these communities that she became interested in public health as a means to improve access to healthcare services and education. She continued to pursue her interests by working for the Care Coordination and Navigation program, providing resources and health education to patients with breast and cervical cancer. In pursuing her MPH, Gabriela plans to pursue her interests in migrant and international health, as well as in developing culturally competent health education programs that will improve the health condition of underserved communities.

Name: Julia Huerta, jkalexander@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Psychology & Human Development and Family Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison (2008)

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: David Ross Gibson, PhD



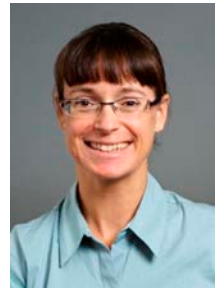
Background and Research Interests: Julia became interested in Public Health through her research as an undergraduate in the Child Emotions Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she worked with children and families suffering from emotional and social disturbances. She wants to pursue research in community mental health programs and promote awareness focused on prevention and intervention of emotional disturbances in childhood. Her goal is to advocate for change within healthcare to include a general awareness of mental health and to bring a balance between assistance provided for both physical and mental health at the community level.

Name: Jeanette Keenan Berrong, jkerrong@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. - Biological Sciences, Santa Clara University (1994); D.O. - Western University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (2001)

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Ulfat Shaikh, MD, MPH & Patrick Romano, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests:

Jeanette completed her family medicine residency at David Grant Medical Center (DGMC), Travis Air Force Base in 2004. In 2008, she completed her active duty tour within the primary care clinics at DGMC stationed in Fairfield and North Highlands. With her current position as a fellow in the UCD Primary Care Outcome Research program, her public health interests are varied but focus on the important role of preventive and evidence-based medicine specifically in the primary care setting. Her public health research interests include healthy lifestyle behaviors, key determinants of provider and patient satisfaction and addressing health education strategies.

Name: Linda Campbell, lmcampbell@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Biological Sciences, Chemistry, CSU Chico (2007)

Area of Emphasis: Environmental Health

Graduate Advisor: Phillip Kass, DVM, MPVM, PhD



Background and Research Interests:

Linda's interest in Public Health first developed while studying the molecular mechanisms of action of DEET, an active ingredient in insect repellents, in Drosophila flies. This experience and coursework in biology, chemistry and biomedical ethics led her to the American Cancer Society where she served as a Cancer Resource Volunteer for four years. Her strong foundation and passion for quantitative methods led her back to biochemical research where she has been for the past year and a half. Linda is extremely motivated in developing her skills as an environmental health specialist and is honored to have been chosen for this program.

Name: Riddhi Desai, rkdesai@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, University of California, Davis (2009)

Area of Emphasis: Epidemiology

Graduate Advisor: Marc Schenker, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests: As an undergrad, Riddhi worked on research that involved defining role of tyrosine-o-sulfation in various biochemical pathways of SARS and Ebola. She is continuing this project with UC Davis Professor Rosenquist. She hopes that the research will lead to therapeutic results and give us better understanding of how some animal viruses adapt to infect humans. She also volunteered in Ride Out Hospital's Emergency department, where she interacted with many different patients. Her interest in public health is culmination of these experiences.

Name: Margaret Fix, mmfix@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. - Human Development, UC Davis (1999)

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Paul Leigh, PhD



Background and Research Interests:

Margaret became interested in public health while researching health care economics for an independent consulting firm in Sacramento. Most recently she worked on a joint project with

the Medical Board of California and UCSF examining physician demographics in California in order to address issues such as physician supply and demand, access to care and physician insurance practices. She is interested in learning more about issues that affect access to care and health disparities and wants to use this to continue research work in these areas.

Name: Mary Gallagher, magallagher@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Human Development, UC Davis (2007)

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Marc Schenker, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests: Mary is interested in health education and prevention. After graduating from UC Davis in 2007, she joined AmeriCorps and worked with an oral health education program in Humboldt County: "Teaching Oral Optimism throughout Humboldt." She gave presentations about oral hygiene and nutrition to over 1200 high risk, low income elementary school students. Mary also administered weekly fluoride supplements to students, conducted parent education seminars, and organized dental service fairs and sealant clinics. Mary would like to find a practicum at a community clinic where she can continue to directly serve people.

Name: Evelyn Hartvig, ehartvig@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): M.D. - UC Davis Medical School (2009), B.S. - Biology, Mount St Mary's College (2001)

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Patrick Romano, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests: Evelyn obtained her undergraduate degree in Biology from Mount St. Mary's College and then conducted research in neuro-psychiatry at Cedar Sinai Medical Center. Her interest in public health developed during her clinical years at UC Davis Medical School. She will be applying for residency in family practice and hopes to utilize the knowledge she obtains through the UCD MPH Program in her practice.

Name: Van La, vtla@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. - Biological Science, emphasis in Molecular and Cell Biology, B.A. - Chinese, UC Davis (2009)

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Stephen McCurdy, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests:

Because of her background as an immigrant from Vietnam and her ability of speaking Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese, Van has a desire to help the immigrant community via interpreting services. In the past two years, she volunteered as an interpreter in Pacific Free Clinic (PFC) in San Jose and was promoted to interpreter chair of the clinic. In addition to her work at PFC, she also volunteered in the Emergency Department at a local hospital. Based on her experience gained from the clinic and hospital, she decided to pursue a master's degree in public health prior to applying to medical school.

Name: Mandy Li, gml@ucdavis.edu

Degrees: B.S. – Human Development, B.A. – Psychology, UC Davis (2008)

Area of Emphasis: Nutrition, Epidemiology

Graduate Advisor: Diana Cassady, DrPH



Background/Interests: Qiao Ming interned in the Office of the Surgeon General under the Acting Director of Science and Communications. One of her main projects involved organizing events in Florida and California to engage the Latino media in promoting childhood obesity prevention. The other project centered on the Surgeon General's Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future nationwide tour to recognize communities that have made outstanding progress in helping the youth of their region make healthier choices. In the future, Qiao Ming hopes to work with under resourced communities to decrease health disparities and improve health literacy.

Name: Liya Manukyan, liyanuk@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Exercise Biology, UC Davis (2007), Physician Assistant Certificate, UC Davis (2009)

Area of Emphasis: Nutrition

Graduate Advisor: Joshua Miller, PhD



Background and Research Interests: While completing her undergraduate degree at UC Davis, Liya became involved in various internships which sparked her interest in pursuing a career in

healthcare. The clinical training and medical knowledge gained through the Physician Assistant program has equipped her with the skills necessary to meet the healthcare needs of a growing population ailed by many chronic diseases. She has especially seen the great need for education and promotion of health maintenance in the areas of physical fitness and nutrition. Her goal is to learn and discover more effective ways of empowering patients to make healthy lifestyle choices in order to help prevent chronic disease.

Name: Amy McCarthy, akmccarthy@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Combined Science, Santa Clara University (2009)

Area of Emphasis: Epidemiology

Graduate Advisor: James Marcin, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests: Amy's four years at Santa Clara University have helped her foster a strong sense of self, and an equally strong sense of social justice. Her interest in social justice spurred her involvement in many community action programs. During her undergraduate career Amy spent over 300 hours volunteering and working in programs for underprivileged adolescents, an activity center for Alzheimer's patients, and a camp for adults and children with physical and developmental disabilities. Amy hopes to use her Master's in Public health to provide affordable, accessible health services to those who carry a disproportionate burden of disease.

Name: Keirsten Mihos, kbmihos@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.A. - Intercultural Communication, California State University, East Bay (1994), International Media and Communication Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden (1992)

Area of Emphasis: Nutrition

Graduate Advisor: Diana Cassady, DrPH



Background and Research Interests: After completing her undergraduate work in intercultural communication, Keirsten spent five years in the nonprofit sector, developing programs in areas such as youth outreach and environmental stewardship. She has spent the past ten years in training and change management for companies of all shapes and sizes, from retail giants to local food cooperatives. She seeks not only the tools to improve nutrition and lifestyle in target populations, but also innovative ways to drive behavior change while respecting culture and personal tradition. Currently, Keirsten is assisting UC Extension to identify trends in public health education.

Name: Joey Leigh Miller, joamiller@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Nutrition Science, UC Davis (2007), Minor- Food Service Management

Area of Emphasis: Nutrition, General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Diana Cassady, DrPH



Background and Research Interests: Joey is interested in the roles lifestyle and nutrition play with respect to chronic diseases, particularly heart disease and diabetes. After finishing UC Davis, she completed a Dietetic Internship at Napa State Hospital. Eligible to become a Registered Dietitian (RD) as of June 26th, 2009, she hopes to use her MPH and dietetics background in helping communities' battle chronic health conditions. She has a background at WIC in breastfeeding promotion and education and organizing weekly food donations for local homeless populations.

Name: Mina Mohammadi, mmohammadi@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.A. - International Relations and Global Studies, University of the Pacific (2008)

Area of Emphasis: Epidemiology (MPH)

Graduate Advisor: Joshua Miller, PhD



Background and Research Interests: Mina is primarily interested in child/maternal health, immunizations and infectious diseases. After studying abroad in Egypt and seeing first handedly the disparities of health on an international scale, it brought her closer to the problems in her country of birth: Afghanistan. For Mina, the field of Epidemiology provides effective tools in confronting large scale health issues. She has worked with the San Joaquin Public Health Services in promoting a data registry system for immunizations records as well as Tri-City Health Center in Fremont, CA with grant research and outreach services.

Name: Fiona Scott, fjscott@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Cell Biology, UC Davis (2008), Minor: Chicano Studies

Area of Emphasis: Epidemiology

Graduate Advisor: Edward Panacek, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests: Fiona is interested in working with Chicano communities both locally and internationally. She spent the past year conducting research at the UC Davis Medical Center in the Emergency Department. Seeing a greater need for health education, Fiona became a peer educator with Students Teaching AIDS to Students, talking to local high school students about HIV/AIDS. Fiona has spent the past year researching liver fibrosis at the UC Davis Medical Center and presented her research project at the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases conference in 2008.

Name: Maria Shaikh, mshaikh@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): Public Health Sciences, UC Irvine (2009)

Area of Emphasis: Epidemiology

Graduate Advisor: Marlene M. von Friederichs-Fitzwater, MS, PhD, MPH



Background and Research Interests: Maria Nageen Shaikh graduated from Irvington High School in 2005 and continued her education at Ohlone College. She transferred to UC Irvine in Fall 2007 as a Biological Sciences Major and graduated in June 2009 with Bachelors in Public Health Sciences. She has experience in Health Care promotion and nutrition, and has worked with the Santa Ana unified school district. At UCI she applied for the Undergraduate research opportunities program grant which will enable Maria and her group to conduct research and make a difference in the lives of cancer patients. She has also conducted literature searches and presented reports on the incidence of Thyroid cancer and the occurrence of cancer in adolescent populations.

Name: Nicholas Stetkevich, npstetkevich@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Biology, Santa Clara University (2006), Teaching Credential, San Jose State University (2008)

Area of Emphasis: Epidemiology

Graduate Advisor: Stephen McCurdy, MD, MPH



Background and Research Interests: After graduation from SCU, Nick earned his teaching credential and taught physics, chemistry, and biology for three years at Silver Creek High School, San Jose CA. Nick's interest in medicine and epidemiology was sparked by his first reading of a Richard Preston novel, The Hot Zone, in high school. Since then he has read numerous books about public health and epidemiology and incorporates public health topics in his science classes.

Name: Molly Tavella, matavella@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Biological Sciences, Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo (2008)

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Elizabeth Miller, MD, PhD



Background and Research Interests: After discovering public health her junior year at Cal Poly, Molly interned at the San Luis Obispo Health Department in the Immunizations Department. There, she educated the public on the importance of vaccinating children against disease. After that, she worked for Cal Poly's Center for Obesity Prevention and Education forming research groups and gathering data to better understand the trends leading to unhealthy lifestyles. After she graduated, she worked face to face with patients at Southern California Heart Specialists in Pasadena. Currently, she is the Saving Lungs, Saving Lives intern for Yolo County Health Department in their Tobacco Education and Control Program.

Name: Sarah Underwood, skunderwood@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Agricultural Systems and Environment, UC Davis (2000), California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, UC Davis (2003)

Area of Emphasis: General Public Health

Graduate Advisor: Debora Paterniti, PhD



Background and Research Interests: Sarah has worked for eight years as a science educator in several educational settings in northern California. In working with thousands of public school students, many of

them from low-income minority families, she observed the startling connection between obesity, race, and socioeconomic status. Sarah's interest in public health focuses on pediatric obesity prevention, from both a nutritional and physical activity standpoint. She is particularly interested in working on public policy changes that establish safer walking and biking routes for children, as a preventive health strategy.

Name: Hang Vu, htmvu@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Neurobiology, Physiology and Behavior, UC Davis (2008)

Area of Emphasis: Epidemiology

Graduate Advisor: Richard Pan, MD, PhD



Background and Research Interests: Hang spent the majority of her undergraduate years as an advocate for the disadvantaged. She values her involvement in VNCARES (Vietnamese Cancer Awareness Research and Education Society), an organization that promotes cancer awareness and provides free screening for the low-income Vietnamese population. After graduating, Hang spent six months in Guatemala in an immersion program, learning the Spanish language, culture and history in order to obtain new skills that will better help her serve others. Her interests include health promotion and education, eliminating barriers to health access, and international health.

Name: Anne Williams, amwilliams@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.S. – Aquatic and Fishery Science, University of Washington (2003)

Area of Emphasis: Environmental Health

Graduate Advisor: Phillip Kass, DVM, MPVM, PhD



Background and Research Interests: Upon graduation from the University of Washington, Anne followed professional opportunities to Alaska where she worked as a fisheries field biologist and later managed a rural reproductive health clinic. During her work she observed firsthand how local politics and culture are closely tied to environmental resource issues that indirectly affect human health in communities. Anne believes that nutritional and health challenges of underserved populations can be addressed by effective data collection, program design and educational outreach. Her long-term goals include utilizing quantitative data to develop Public Health programs, influence policy, and working with diverse populations to effect positive health outcomes.

Name: Nicholas Williams, nrwilliams@ucdavis.edu

Degree(s): B.A. – Molecular & Cell Biology,
UC Berkeley (2008)

Area of Emphasis: Nutrition

Graduate Advisor: William Bommer, MD



Background and Research Interests: Prior to coming to UC Davis, Nick emphasized in Neurobiology at the University of California at Berkeley. He volunteered at the Riverside County Department of Public Health in the HIV/AIDS division and acquired a passion for Public Health. He plans on attending medical school after completing the MPH program, and intends to pursue a career that integrates nutrition, fitness, and epidemiology. Nick hopes to address childhood obesity and its consequent health problems with an anatomical- and molecular-based approach, coupled with healthy lifestyle choices.

About MPH at UC Davis

The UC Davis MPH program is designed for people interested in disease prevention and community health. The program includes instruction in epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental and occupational health, health services and administration, and social and behavioral science, and prepares students for an expanding range of professional opportunities and roles in public health and medicine.

Questions and Information:

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