

ISPM News Archive 2010

16.11.2010 08:30

Swiss Epidemiology Winter School: Meta-analysis in context (January 17–21, 2011)

The concept of the Swiss Epidemiology Winter School in Wengen resembles that of the well-known summer schools but focuses on a different topic every year, and the duration of the course is one week only.



Students stay on site and work hard in the morning. They then have an extended break to review course materials, catch up on emails or (more likely) to go skiing. We reconvene at 5 pm for the computer sessions, which continue after dinner. The course takes place during the week following the International Lauberhorn ski race in January, when Wengen is calm, with few people on the slopes.

The school ran for the first time in 2010 and was attended by 31 students from 7 countries. It is accredited by the Swiss School of Public Health (2 ECTS). The topic in 2011 will be “Systematic Reviews in the Health Sciences: Meta-Analysis in Context”. The course will run from January 17-21, 2011. Faculty will include Professors Matthias Egger, Julian Higgins, Peter Juni and others.

Further information:

- [Flyer](#)
- [Website](#)

01.11.2010 00:00

Peter Jüni new professor of clinical epidemiology

For the newly created position of a Full Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Bern, the Board of Directors of the University has appointed Prof. Peter Jüni. He will assume this post on November 1, 2010.



Peter Jüni (43) grew up in Bern and studied medicine at the University of Bern. After graduation in 1995, he worked as a specialist registrar in internal medicine and rheumatology in various Bernese hospitals. A number of research stays took him to the Department of Social Medicine at the University of Bristol (England). From 2002 onwards, he was a Senior Research Fellow, initially at the Department of Rheumatology, Clinical Immunology and Allergology at the Inselspital, later at the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine of the University of Bern where he received Venia docendi (Habilitation) in 2005 and was promoted to Associate Professor of Clinical Epidemiology in 2009. The focus of Peter's research is on the epidemiology and treatment of osteoarthritis and coronary heart disease, and on research methodology.

Für die an der Medizinischen Fakultät neu geschaffene ausserordentliche Professur in klinischer Epidemiologie hat die Universitätsleitung Prof. Peter Jüni gewählt. Er tritt seine Stelle am 1. November 2010 an.

Peter Jüni (43) ist in Bern aufgewachsen und hat an der Universität Bern Medizin studiert. Nach dem Staatsexamen im Jahre 1995 arbeitete er bis 2001 als Assistenzarzt in Innerer Medizin und Rheumatologie in verschiedenen Berner Spitalern. Mehrere Forschungsaufenthalte führten ihn wiederholt ans Department of Social Medicine der Universität Bristol (England). Ab 2002 war er als wissenschaftlicher Oberarzt zuerst in der Klinik für Rheumatologie, klinische Immunologie und Allergologie des Inselspitals, später am Institut für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin der Universität Bern tätig, wo er 2005 habilitierte und 2009 zum assoziierten Professor für klinische Epidemiologie befördert wurde. Im Zentrum seiner Forschungstätigkeit stehen die Epidemiologie und Therapie der Arthrose und der koronaren Herzkrankheit und Fragen zur Forschungsmethodik.

26.10.2010 14:13

ISPM paper nominated for outstanding article award

The paper entitled “Age and gender differences in health-related quality of life of children and adolescents in Europe” (Michel G, Bisegger C, Fuhr D & Abel T, Qual Life Res 2009;18(9):1147–57) published in the Quality of Life Research journal has been nominated for the ISOQOL Outstanding Article of the Year Award.



The Outstanding Article of the Year Award recognizes the single best article dedicated to healthrelated quality of life research published in Quality of Life Research journal during the previous calendar year. This award recognizes the author(s) for significant intellectual contributions that promise to advance the state of the art in HRQOL research methods or theory.

[Link to paper](#)

ERS/Marie Curie Joint Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for Ben Spycher

This 12-month post-doctoral fellowship will allow Ben to visit the University of Bristol where he wants to gain experience in genetic epidemiology and continue his research on phenotypes of asthma in children using data from the large ALSPAC (Avon longitudinal study of parents and children) cohort study.



The ERS (European Respiratory Society) is co-funding a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship programme (RESPIRE) jointly with the European Commission Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) - Marie Curie Actions, with the aims of:

- Promoting advanced science, research and training techniques in research, in the field of respiratory medicine and science in Europe;
- Supporting the exchange in Europe of outstanding scientists/investigators as well as clinicians with promising careers, actively involved in respiratory medicine;
- Contributing to the diffusion and implementation of new techniques in Europe and internationally.
- Highlighting and stimulating postdoctoral career opportunities in the respiratory research area in Europe.

ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are established to advance respiratory medicine and science by helping PhD holders and postgraduate scientists/clinicians holding 4 years full-time research experience to visit another research laboratory or clinical unit in Europe with a view to applying an advanced research technique not available in the Home unit. ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are intended to foster advanced and innovative research and do as well support applications which are presented as a training component of a research project (e.g. apply advanced research, research in order to innovate a clinical technique).

08.10.2010 08:34

International Geneva Award 2010 for Olivia Keiser

The Award is a prestigious academic distinction specifically created to promote links between Swiss academics and International Geneva.



The International Geneva Award has been established by the Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS) to encourage outstanding research scientists to produce publications that are particularly relevant for International Organisations. It is given to the three best papers published on a subject related to International Studies and especially useful from the perspective of the Academic Council of International Geneva. The SNIS considers that International Studies should deal not only with the analysis of international relations, but also with political, economic, social, environmental, legal, and health issues that extend beyond national boundaries. Submitted papers are from a wide range of academic disciplines, such as political science, economics, sociology, epidemiology, social and cultural anthropology, law, history, geography, environmental sciences, and related areas. The SNIS provides 15000 CHF annually for the award.

The Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS) promotes academic research on phenomena that transcend traditional nation-state boundaries. The SNIS strongly encourages pluri-disciplinary research and fosters collaboration between Swiss organisations of higher education, International Organizations and NGOs. Bringing together academics, practitioners and policy makers, the SNIS aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice in international studies and contributes to sharpening the Swiss profile in this highly relevant field.

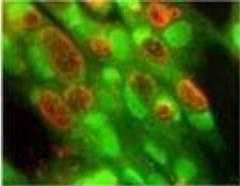
Link:

[Swiss Network for International Studies \(SNIS\)](#)

08.10.2010 08:06

International workshop on dynamics of Chlamydia trachomatis infection

The EpideMMIC (Epidemiology and Mathematical Modeling for Infectious disease Control) project is holding a 3-day international workshop on the dynamics of sexually transmitted chlamydia infections, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.



Invited attendees are colleagues from Indiana University School of Medicine: Prof. Byron Batteiger, Prof. J. Dennis Fortenberry, Dr. Bobbie Van Der Pol, Prof. Wanzhu Tu and Mr. Jingwei Wei; Uppsala University, Dr. Björn Herrmann; Dutch National Public Health Institute, Dr. Boris Schmid.

Prof. Dennis Fortenberry will give a seminar about adolescent sexual health and sexuality on Monday 1st November, 4-5pm, ISPM Seminar Room, 1st Floor, Finkenhubelweg 11. Prof. Fortenberry is an international expert on adolescent sexual behavior and sexually transmitted infections.

Survival of HIV patients starting ART in sub-Saharan Africa

Research by ISPM researchers and international colleagues published in *The Lancet* means that the survival of HIV patients starting ART in sub-Saharan Africa may now be predicted.



In high-income countries, prognostic models have been developed to help predict survival in HIV patients starting ART. Although death rates are higher in developing countries with fewer resources, especially in the first year of therapy, no prognostic models are available for patients in sub-Saharan Africa. Prognosis for patients starting antiretroviral therapy would be useful for clinical decision making, to counsel patients, and for the planning of health services and treatment guidelines.

In this study, the team of researchers led by Matthias Egger from ISPM developed two new prognostic models for estimating the risk of death in the first year of ART in sub-Saharan Africa. They identified risk factors for death in patients starting ART in four large ART scale-up programmes in Côte D'Ivoire, South Africa, and Malawi that participate in the International epidemiological Databases to Evaluate AIDS (IeDEA). Survival models were used to construct a prognostic model based on six clinical predictors-CD4 cell count, clinical stage, bodyweight, age, and sex (CD4 model). Because CD4 cell count and viral load are not routinely measured in many African clinics they also developed a second model which replaced CD4 cell count with total lymphocyte count and haemoglobin concentration in the blood-anaemia.

Both models provided similarly accurate predictions of early death in patients starting ART compared with observed deaths. The likelihood of death at 1 year ranged from 0.9% for patients in the lowest risk category for all prognostic indicators, to 52.5% for patients at the highest risk with the CD4 model, and from 0.9% to 59.6% with the total lymphocyte and haemoglobin model.

In an accompanying Comment, Olivier Koole and Robert Colebunders from the Institute of Tropical Medicine, in Antwerp, Belgium discuss the state of ART in resource poor settings and conclude: "The challenges to treat all patients with HIV are enormous. As long-term funding for HIV is running flat and access to antiretrovirals still is a huge challenge, HIV research aimed at how to do more with less should be a top priority research issue for the coming years."

Links:

- [Paper in The Lancet](#)
- [Comment in The Lancet](#)
- [International epidemiological Databases to Evaluate AIDS \(IeDEA\)](#)

06.08.2010 09:00

ISPM seminars 2010/2011

The 2010/2011 seminar programme, which has been released this week, includes 11 talks by speakers from Switzerland, Germany and the UK.



The first seminar will be given by Maria Blettner from IMBEI, University of Mainz. She will talk about "A cohort study in Germany of childhood cancer incidence after postnatal diagnostic x-ray exposure". Other speakers include Johannes Siegrist ("Social reward and health – a sociological contribution to epidemiology"), Bruna Gallobardes ("Health inequalities: What more research do we need?") and Sabine Rohrmann who will present results from the EPIC study on alcohol and cancer. In December George Davey Smith will give a thought provoking talk about the future of medicine: "The Chimeras of Personalised Medicine and the Explanation of Individual Difference". Please check out the [programme](#) (PDF, 17KB) and come along.

For more information click [here](#).

13.07.2010 10:12

Child sexual abuse common worldwide

ISPM researchers have found that about one in eight girls and one in fifteen boys had experienced child sexual abuse (defined as non-consensual sexual intercourse).



The study is part of the larger Optimus Study. The investigators reviewed data from 52 surveys in 24 different countries. The figures for other types of abuse are even higher. The findings also suggest that a high proportion of children and adults suffer from mental disorders related to child sexual abuse.

For a more detailed description of the project please see the PDF in [German](#), [French](#), [English](#).

Link to [Optimus Study](#)

15.06.2010 17:15

Swiss National Cohort Workshop

You are cordially invited to a workshop of the Swiss National Cohort on July 1st 2010.



The Swiss National Cohort investigators organize a workshop on population based cohort studies on July 1, 2010. The workshop will take place in the afternoon in Bern in the UniS building near the train station. Prof. Tim Lash (Boston University and University of Aarhus) will give a key note lecture on «Using population-wide health registries to improve the quality of nonrandomized epidemiologic research». In eight brief presentations new results from the Swiss National Cohort will then be presented, covering mortality and religion, marital status and mortality, the physical environment and cardiovascular mortality, homicide/suicides (family dramas) in Swiss households, cancer mortality trends and parental education and risk of childhood cancer.

For the workshop flyer and free registration go to <http://www.swissnationalcohort.ch>

28.05.2010 17:27

Three new PhDs awarded

Congratulations to three colleagues, who recently received their PhD in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, based on research on sources of bias in meta-analysis of clinical trials, epidemiological aspects of childhood cancer and on phenotypic variability of wheezing disorders in infants and children.



Eveline Nüesch: Bias and variation in meta-analyses of randomised clinical trials

[Link to abstract, publications and photo](#) (pdf)

[Link to thesis](#)

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Martin Adam: Epidemiology of Childhood Cancer in Switzerland: Access to care and socioeconomic differentials in incidence and survival

[Link to abstract, publications and photo](#) (pdf)

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Ben Spycher: Analysis of phenotypic variation in childhood wheezing disorders

[Link to abstract, publications and photo](#) (pdf)

[Link to thesis](#)

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20.05.2010 08:37

Swiss Meeting for Infectious Disease Dynamics 2010

The first "Swiss Meeting for Infectious Disease Dynamics" (SMIDDY 2010) will take place on Friday, 28th of May 2010, in Bern.



The one-day meeting focuses on the field of mathematical, computational and statistical modeling of infectious disease dynamics. As the first meeting of its kind, it aims to bring together the different research groups that work in this field within Switzerland.

The meeting is fully booked and registration is closed. More information can be found on www.smiddy.ch.

Photo credit: upload.wikimedia.org

19.05.2010 11:54

Psychological distress in adult childhood cancer survivors: the Swiss Childhood Cancer Survivor Study

This is the first paper of the Swiss Childhood Cancer Survivors Study addressing psychological distress in 987 adult childhood cancer survivors in Switzerland. Overall results were reassuring, with the majority of survivors reporting low levels of distress.



Gisela Michel, Cornelia E. Rebholz, Nicolas X. von der Weid, Eva Bergstraesser & Claudia E. Kuehni (2010) for the Swiss Paediatric Oncology Group.

Journal of Clinical Oncology. doi:10.1200/JCO.2009.23.4534.

This is the first paper of the Swiss Childhood Cancer Survivors Study addressing psychological distress in 987 adult childhood cancer survivors in Switzerland who had been diagnosed with cancer under age 16 years and survived for at least 5 years. Overall results were reassuring, with the majority of survivors reporting low levels of distress. However, one fourth of survivors, instead of the expected 10% in the norm population, reported distress to a degree that makes closer observation and potentially counselling worthwhile. Comparisons with psychotherapy patients indicated that survivors' distress is clinically significant. We conclude that it is desirable to monitor psychological distress in childhood cancer survivors during follow-up care even years after they have been cured. A close collaboration with key workers in the psychosocial area may provide an optimal environment to immediately deal with imminent psychosocial problems. Link: Psychological distress in adult childhood cancer survivors: the Swiss Childhood Cancer Survivor Study.

Link:

- [Publication PubMed](#)

22.04.2010 11:54

Die Abteilung Gesundheitsforschung und die CTU sind vorübergehend umgezogen

Seit dem 21. April 2010 befinden sich die Abteilung Gesundheitsforschung und die CTU in neuen Räumlichkeiten.



Bitte beachten Sie die neuen Adressen:

Abteilung Gesundheitsforschung: Gesellschaftsstrasse 2, 3012 Bern

CTU: Schanzeneckstrasse 1, 3012 Bern

Die Telefonnummern der jeweiligen MitarbeiterInnen haben sich nicht geändert.

06.04.2010 09:19

New professor in Epidemiology and Public Health

Nicola Low has been promoted to Associate Professor by the Faculty of Medicine.



Nicola Low is head of the [sexual and reproductive health research group](#) in the Division of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

18.03.2010 08:38

Three inaugural lectures on April fool's day

We have the pleasure to announce the inaugural lectures of Claudia Kuehni, Martin Rösli and Marcel Zwahlen on April 1, 4 pm at the Institute of Anatomy, "Alter Hörsaal", Baltzerstrasse 2, 3012 Bern.



The presentations (20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of discussion) will be in German. The titles are:

Tino Flautino – wenn Kinder pfeifen (Claudia Kuehni)

Überall online und verbunden: Ist das eigentlich schädlich? (Martin Rösli)

Gefährdet der Umgang mit Risiken und Wahrscheinlichkeiten unsere Gesundheit? (Marcel Zwahlen)

After the presentations you are cordially invited to celebrate with drinks and snacks.

[Flyer](#) (pdf, 52KB)

24.02.2010 09:36

Four new PhDs awarded

Congratulations to four colleagues, who recently received their PhD in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, based on research on the scale up of antiretroviral therapy in low-income settings, lung development and wheezing disorders in infants and children, social and environmental determinants of mortality in Switzerland and novel statistical approaches for evidence synthesis.



Olivia Keiser: The clinical and public health epidemiology of combination antiretroviral therapy in low-income settings: collaborative analyses of cohort studies

[Link to abstract, publications and photo](#) (pdf, 27KB)

Philipp Latzin: Lung development in health and disease: early-life risk factors and their impact on lung function, inflammation and respiratory symptoms

[Link to abstract, publications and photo](#) (pdf, 29KB)

Adrian Spörri-Fahrni: Social, cultural, environmental and spatial characteristics of mortality in Switzerland: The Swiss National Cohort

[Link to abstract, publications and photo](#) (pdf, 32KB)

Simon Wandel: Multi-parameter evidence synthesis

[Link to abstract, publications and photo](#) (pdf, 21KB)

Photo credit: www.flickr.com

26.01.2010 12:04

Major trial evaluating aerosolised measles vaccination

The trial, sponsored by the Gates Foundation, WHO and Serum Institute of India began on 20.12.2009.



So far, about 500 infants out of a target of 2000 have been enrolled in villages around Pune, Maharashtra State, India. They receive measles vaccine, which is either aerosolised and given through a face mask, or injected subcutaneously. The randomised trial will show whether the aerosolised vaccine can stimulate protective levels of antibodies that are as high as those achieved with subcutaneous vaccine (>90%) and has an acceptable safety profile. If successful, the new vaccine delivery route could avoid the risks of unsafe injections and be licensed for use in mass immunisation campaigns.

Nicola Low and Pippa Scott at ISPM are involved in the study design, safety evaluation and statistical aspects of the trial.

Link:

- [WHO Measles Aerosol Project](#)

12.01.2010 15:43

A new specialist in Public Health Medicine

Nicole Bender passed her exam on Prevention and Public Health on December 10th 2009.



Nicole Bender is the coordinator of all teaching activities, including undergraduate teaching and the PhD programme, at the ISPM Bern. Her main research interest is evolutionary medicine, in particular the evolution of common complex diseases like obesity. More about her can be found on the [teamlist](#) and in the [description of her research group](#).