
UCI Program in Public Health



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Dear UCI community,

As we move forward into this new year, we'd like to thank our community of students, staff, and faculty for their diligence and dedication to public health in the past year. Throughout the year, we mobilized the skills and expertise of our intrepid community to address the challenges of the global pandemic. Please join us in celebrating the accomplishments of our inspiring colleagues as captured in the highlights from 2020 below. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about Public Health and the full volume of work being done. We look forward to building upon the successes of 2020 and continuing these inspiring initiatives in the new year.

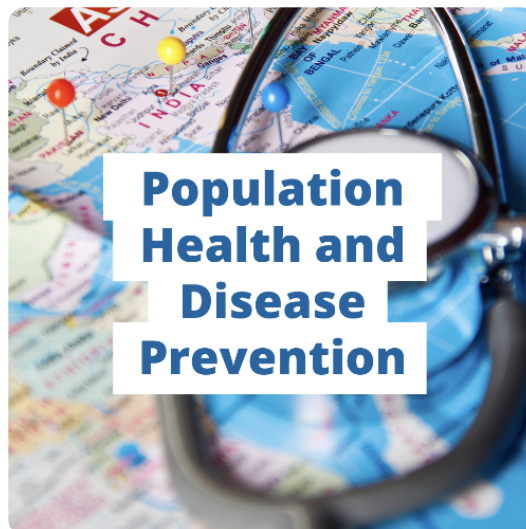
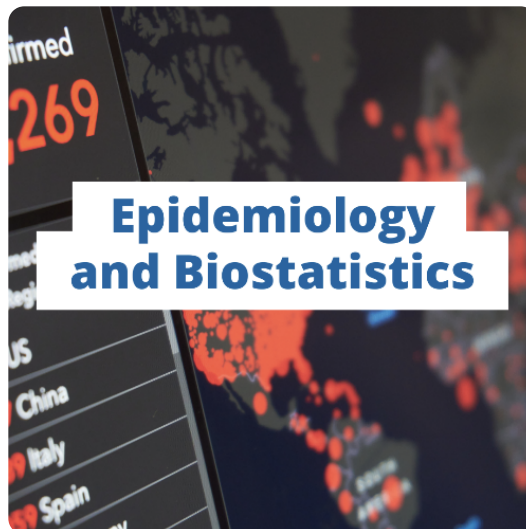
Sincerely,

Bernadette Boden-Albala, MPH, DrPH
Director and Founding Dean
UCI Program in Public Health

DEPARTMENTS AND TRANSITION TO SCHOOL



In the past year and as part of our transition to a School of Population and Public Health, the Senate approved the establishment of two new departments and the transfer of a department, transforming us into a program with four distinct departments that serve as the foundation of public health:



COVID-19



Since the start of the global pandemic, members of the UCI Public Health community have come together in inspiring ways to address the unique challenges posed by COVID-19. We are thankful for the diligence of our community as it forms collaborations to effectively respond to the pandemic on campus, in Orange County, and beyond. See below for examples of some of the work that has been done to address the pandemic in 2020. Visit our [website](#) for more info.



Santa Ana Surveillance Study

In partnership with the City of Santa Ana, we tested the antibodies of over 3,300 residents to determine COVID-19 exposure throughout the community using innovative protein microarray technology developed here at the University. The project is integrated, in part, into Santa Ana CARES, the city's existing infrastructure of COVID-19 mobile resource units.

[LEARN MORE](#)



actOC

In a large-scale, population-based study done in partnership with the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA), we conducted antibody testing in a sample of approximately 3,000 Orange County residents to better understand the true prevalence of the virus in the county. [Findings](#) showed that the prevalence was seven-fold greater than previously estimated and that the virus disproportionately affects Hispanic and low-income adults.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Anteater Pledge Ambassador Program

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 on campus, we worked with partners across the university to develop and implement the Anteater Pledge Ambassador Program, which aims to educate the campus community about reducing the spread of COVID-19 through evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention behaviors.

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Monarch Beach Resort Consultancy Project

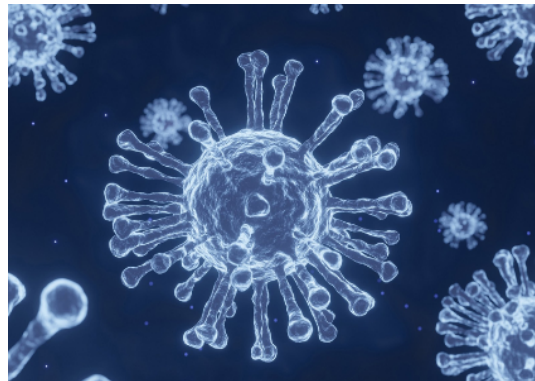
This year, we provided expert advice to Monarch Beach Resort in a project that aimed to elevate the resort's existing StaySafe Program.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Pacific Symphony Consultancy Project

To develop safety protocols and a plan to produce safe live events, The Pacific Symphony turned to UCI experts in infectious diseases



A surveillance-based approach to estimating uncounted COVID-19 cases -- a study

This ongoing study aims to determine the true case fatality rate of COVID-19 and will use antibody testing to calculate the incidence of COVID-19 by race/ethnicity, age, gender, and

from the Program in Public Health.

place.

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Health Equity Contact Tracing Workshop

Modeling: Patterns of the COVID-19 pandemic spread around the world

This Summer 2020 workshop trained public health practitioners, students, community leaders, and residents to do contact tracing for COVID-19 with a fundamental focus on health equity.

UCI researchers Drs. Dominik Wodarz and Natalia Komarova analyzed epidemic data from over 174 countries to discover patterns in the spread of the disease around the world.

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Surveillance of Emergency Responders' Virus Exposure in Orange County (ServeOC)

Knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of COVID-19 in the Vietnamese American

Done in partnership with OCHCA, this study led by Dr. Veronica Vieira involves COVID-19 antibody testing of over 1,200 Orange County fire department personnel with follow-up testing of participants that test positive to determine how low antibodies are present after infection. This study is ongoing and more information will be released upon its completion.

community

The goal of this project, led by Dr. Karen Edwards, is to assess knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of COVID-19 among the Vietnamese American community that have the ability to influence behaviors like social distancing, handwashing, and other practices that reduce transmission. More information is coming soon.

RESEARCH



Kleinman vaping study named one of top 10 UC studies in 2020

Named one of the top 10 UC studies in 2020, Dr. Michael Kleinman's vaping study identified the heating elements in e-cigarettes as the likely culprits behind serious lung injuries associated with vaping. [Learn more >>](#)



UCI collaborates with global partners in malaria study

With funding from the NIH Fogarty International Center and in partnership with Maseno University in Kenya and Jimma University in Ethiopia, Drs. Guiyun Yan and Daniel Parker will investigate the challenges in malaria control faced by many African countries, including insecticide resistance, altered vector biting behavior, and antimalarial drug resistance. Their work will continue through December 2024. [Learn more >>](#)



Air Pollution Health Effects Lab (APHEL) Alzheimer's study

This year, APHEL, co-directed by Dr. Kleinman, began gearing up for a 1-year exposure experiment to study the effects of ultrafine, fine and coarse PM on the development and progression of Alzheimer's disease-related brain cellular and biochemical changes. [Learn more >>](#)



UCI receives \$1M from CDC/ATSDR to study PFAS contaminated drinking water

As part of a study sponsored by the CDC Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Dr. Scott Bartell is currently investigating the extent to which per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) -- toxic chemicals that have been detected in public water supplies in Orange County and beyond -- are associated with a variety of cross-sectional health outcomes in children and adults. [Learn more >>](#)

FACULTY GRANTS & AWARDS



Drs. Yan and Ogunseitan named among top 2% scientists in the world

This Fall, Drs. Guiyun Yan and Oladele Ogunseitan were identified as top 2% scientists in the world! Both are ranked in the top 1% of their fields, according to a Stanford University report released in November 2020. The list represents the top 3% of the most-cited scientists in various disciplines and includes 159,683 persons.



Latino Health Equity Initiative "Under the Same Sky" Award

As a key partner in the Latino Health Equity Initiative, Dean Bernadette Boden-Albala was given an award at the organization's Fall 2020 "Under the Same Sky" event. The award is in recognition of Dean Boden-Albala's leadership and commitment to keeping families safe and communities healthier while ensuring access to reliable and timely data about the impact of COVID-19 in the local community.

Roxanna Todd Hodges Lectureship on Stroke Prevention and Education

Dean Bernadette Boden-Albala was also selected to receive the *Roxanna Todd Hodges Lectureship on Stroke Prevention and Education* for her contributions to reducing disparities in stroke awareness, care, and outcomes. Awarded by the University of Southern California's Division of Neurocritical Care and Stroke at the Keck School of Medicine through a donation from the Roxanna Todd Hodges Foundation, the lectureship engages world-renowned stroke experts in the areas of research and prevention.



National Cancer Institute

Dr. Michael Hoyt received a National Cancer Institute grant for his study *A Randomized Controlled Trial of Emotion Regulation Therapy for Cancer Caregivers: A Mechanism-Targeted Approach to Addressing Caregiver Distress*. Results from this study will advance the science of informal caregivers (IC) intervention research by addressing a critical gap in our field's ability to powerfully, quickly, and effectively address IC anxiety and depression.

Diversity and Disparities in Cancer Research Traineeship

Congratulations to Dr. Michael A. Hoyt and research assistant Raymond Carrillo Ceja for their lab's recent undergraduate "Diversity and Disparities in Cancer

Research Traineeship Supplement" from the Cancer Research Coordinating Committee of the University of California Office of the President. Raymond Carrillo Ceja will complete a one year training plan under the mentorship of Michael Hoyt focused on increasing research skills and knowledge around cancer survivorship in Latino young adults.



2020 Tom Hall Education Grant

This year, Dr. Oladele Ogunseitan was selected to receive the Tom Hall Education Grant by the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH). The grant will support his project entitled "Delphi Procedure for Defining Next Generation Competencies for One Health".

Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Fellowship

Dr. Ogunseitan was also named one of this year's AAAS fellows for distinguished contributions in studies using fundamental science to inform impacts of toxic components in manufacturing on human and environmental health with significant societal impacts. Dr. Ogunseitan is one of 9 UCI faculty that have been named this year and one of 185 in the university's history.



NASA Natural Disasters and Disaster Response Project

This past year, Dr. Lisa Grant Ludwig received funding from NASA to study natural disasters and disaster response to help develop data analysis tools for emergency responders to assess disaster impacts. Read more about this project [here](#) and view Dr. Ludwig's presentation on the topic [here](#).

Through Our Eyes, Hear Our Stories: Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities in a Time of Pandemic



Dr. Sora Park Tanjasiri received funding from the UCI Office of Inclusive Excellence to conduct a Photovoice needs assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 in Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in Orange County.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS



2020-2021 Public Impact Fellowship Award: Awarded to **Theresa Duong** and **Brandon Osborn** in recognition of academic excellence and dedication to research that demonstrates the potential to significantly improve the lives of others.

2020-2021 Chancellor's Club Fund for Excellence Fellowship Award: Awarded to **Brandon Osborn** in recognition of academic excellence, accomplishments, and leadership qualities consistent with the mission of the Chancellor's Club to represent, develop, and support our future leaders.

2020 WOEMA Virtual Poster Presentation Award: Awarded to **Dr. Oluseyi Awodele** for becoming first-place winner of the Western Occupational and Environmental Medical Association (WOEMA) 2020 virtual poster presentation.

F31 NIH (NIAID): Given to doctoral student **Gabrielle Gussin**, who received an outstanding score on her F31 application to NIH (NIAID) and will be one of the first individually funded students in the Program in Public Health.

NIOSH Fellowship: Awarded to **Ivy Torres** for her work about the disability cross-over undergone by Latina immigrants and **Margaret Whitley** for her research in work organization and stress-related disorders.

NIH National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMH) Grant:

Awarded to MPH student **Samantha Garcia** for her project titled *Individual, Interpersonal, and Community Factors Associated with HPV Vaccine Hesitancy among Mexican American Young Adult Women*.

Dr. Lorna Carlin Excellence in Research Award: Awarded to **Nicole Stivers** for her promising translational scholarship.

The HeadBand Project: Strength in Buttons: A non-profit started by fourth-year student **Stephanie Romero** in response to the pandemic that supplies healthcare personnel and essential workers with free headbands that alleviate ear discomfort from wearing PPE for extended periods of time.

**PUBLICATIONS**

Title: Goal-focused emotion-regulation therapy for young adult survivors of testicular cancer: Feasibility of a behavioral intervention

PI: Dr. Michael Hoyt

Description: This paper describes the feasibility and acceptability of a novel intervention that aims to improve distress symptoms, emotion regulation, and goal navigation skills in young adult testicular cancer patients.

[Learn more >>](#)



Title: Exploring the association between physical trust and recurrent stroke and transient ischemic attack (TIA)

PI: Dr. Bernadette Boden-Albala

Description: This study assesses the relationship between physician trust and recurrent stroke/TIA within 1 year of

discharge among stroke survivors in Northern Manhattan.

[Learn more >>](#)



Title: Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in drinking water and birthweight in the U.S.

PIs: Dr. Scott Bartell and PhD student Yachen Zhu

Description: This study describes modifications to generalized additive models (GAM) frameworks to improve the ways in which geographic disease risks are mapped in epidemiological studies. [Learn more >>](#)



Title: Spatial heterogeneity of the associations of economic and health care factors with infant/child mortality in China using geographically-weighted regression model

PI: Dr. Jun Wu

Description: Dr. Wu examines associations between economic factors and health care resources on infant mortality rates in China, looking specifically at prefecture-level spatial heterogeneity and clustering. [Learn more >>](#)



Title: Antibiotics stewardship in Ghana: a cross-sectional study of public knowledge, attitudes, and practices among communities

PIs: Dr. Oladele Ogunseitan and PhD student Tamara Jimah

Description: This study identifies strategies for improved stewardship of antibiotics to prevent the proliferation of resistant pathogens by assessing the level of antibiotic knowledge, attitudes, and consumption behaviors by region, gender, age, and education in rural and urban Ghana. [Learn more >>](#)

Title: Coastal urbanization influences human pathogens and microdebris contamination in seafood

PI: Dr. Daniel Parker



Description: In an analysis of microparticles found in coastal samples from Myanmar, this study investigations the chemicals being consumed by human populations (including baby formula) that are clearly detectable in coastal waters. [Learn more >>](#)



Title: Ethnic enclaves, discrimination, and stress among Asian American women: Differences by nativity and time in the United States

PI: Dr. Brittany Morey

Description: This study examines how two different aspects of ethnic enclaves -- neighborhood ethnic concentration and cultural institutions -- are associated with discrimination and stress among Asian American women.

[Learn more >>](#)



EDUCATION & PRESENTATIONS



Lunchtime Lectures Series

This year, we hosted a series of Lunchtime Lectures to inform and engage the UCI community on the public health efforts in our community and on campus by highlight the work of faculty that are contributing to COVID-19 research – all in an easy to digest manner. View the series playlist [here](#).



Persisting Inequalities and Paths Forward: A Report on the State of Undocumented Students at California's Public Universities

Dec. 10, 2020 - Dr. Annie Ro delivered a presentation as part of a project with the UC Collaborative to Promote Immigrant and Student Equity ([UC PromISE](#)). During this presentation, Dr. Ro gave a briefing on a new report from UC PromISE where she offered in-depth coverage of the findings and a discussion of what stakeholders need to know to advance equity and inclusion for undocumented students.



The People of Physical Sciences Podcast

Dec. 2020 - Dr. Dominik Wodarz joins the UCI School of Physical Sciences' "The People of Physical Sciences" podcast as a guest speaker in a conversation that spans the world from the colors of the rainbow, to the predators and prey on the African Serengeti, and back around to the coronavirus pandemic. [Listen now >>](#)



Orange County Bar Association Webinar: The Science of COVID-19

Nov. 13, 2020 - In this webinar, Dean Bernadette Boden-Albala and Dr. Andrew Noymer join the Orange County Bar Association for a discussion about the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic in Orange County. [Watch now >>](#)



2020 ASHG Virtual Conference

Oct. 27-30, 2020 - The Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics has had strong representation this year with graduate students presenting their research at the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) virtual conference in

October. ASHG is the world's largest human genetics conference.



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