Winter 2011

Update is a periodic look at SSS staff research activities, new awards, corporate news and recognition, and upcoming conferences. For additional information on SSS projects, visit our website.

Research Activities

**Relationship between Parkinson Disease and Melanoma**
An article published in *Neurology* and reported in *U.S. News and World Report* included among its authors SSS researcher Yi Lu. The article describes an analysis of epidemiologic studies that reported risk estimates of melanoma among patients with Parkinson disease (PD) or vice versa. Collective epidemiologic evidence supports an association of PD with melanoma. The article was coauthored by Riu Liu (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences [NIEHS]), Xiang Gao (Harvard), and Honglei Chen (NIEHS).

**Hospitalizations for Eating Disorders**
A Statistical Brief published by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) was lead-authored by SSS researcher Yafu Zhao. The brief presents data from the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project on national estimates of hospitalizations for eating disorders over the decade from 1999–2009. The brief, coauthored by William Encinosa (AHRQ), presents an update on a previous Statistical Brief on the subject by these same authors.

**Early-Life Exposures Affecting Uterine Fibroids**
An article published in *Environmental Health Perspectives* included among its authors SSS researcher Aimee D’Aloisio. The article describes an evaluation of associations of early-life and childhood exposures with early onset fibroids in blacks and compared the results to those in whites using data from the SSS-supported, NIEHS-funded Sister Study. Findings support a possible role of early-life factors in fibroid development. The article was coauthored by NIEHS researchers Donna Baird, Lisa DeRoo, and Dale Sandler.

**Progress on Children’s Health Care Quality Measures**
SSS researcher Xiuhua Chen was among the authors of a poster entitled “Child and Adolescent Health Care Quality in the CHIPRA Era – Are We Improving?” that was presented at the AHRQ Annual Meeting, the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, and the Coalition for Health Services Research Meeting. The presentation described a study that reviewed children’s health care quality measures presented in the National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports and concluded that there was little evidence of reductions in disparities by race, ethnicity, or income in children’s health care quality. The poster was coauthored by AHRQ researchers Denise Dougherty and Ernest Moy.

**Incremental Cost of Postacute Care in Nursing Homes**
An article published in *Health Services Research* included among its authors SSS researcher Rhona Limcangco. The article describes an analysis to determine whether the case mix index based on the 53 Resource Utilization Groups captures all the cross-sectional variation in nursing home costs. The article coauthors were William Spector (AHRQ), Heather Ladd, and Dana Mukamel.
Textbook on Family Planning Programs and Policies
A chapter entitled “Family Planning” included among its authors SSS researcher Linda Piccinino and is to be published in the 3rd edition of *Maternal and Child Health: Programs, Problems and Policies in Public Health*, an introductory textbook on maternal and child health. The chapter was coauthored by Amy Tsui and C. Arden Miller.

Pesticide Use and Parkinson Disease
An article in *Environmental Health Perspectives* describes research that examined whether pesticides that cause mitochondrial dysfunction or oxidative stress are associated with PD. By assessing lifetime use of pesticides in a case–control study nested in the Agricultural Health Study, PD was positively associated with two groups of pesticides. This work is supported by SSS’ NIEHS-funded Farming and Movement Evaluation Study.

Sister and Two-Sister Studies
Articles on Examiner.com and in the Dayton Daily News described SSS’ NIEHS-funded Sister Study and the Two-Sister Study.

New Awards

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Hospice Payment System Reform
SSS is preparing an analytical database using the Hospice Standard Analytical Files to support CMS in its efforts to reform the hospice payment system. The work is being conducted under a subcontract to Abt Associates.

Support PEPFAR Combination Prevention Group To Maximize Scientific Collaboration
SSS is providing administrative and operational support as the Secretariat to the PEPFAR Combination Prevention Group chaired by the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC). The Secretariat is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to maximize scientific collaboration on research addressing community-level evaluation of a combination of HIV prevention interventions in Tanzania, Botswana, Zambia, and South Africa.

Analyze National Home Health Aide Survey Results
SSS is analyzing the 2007 National Home Health Aide Survey for the Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. SSS will develop manuscripts and policy briefs on workforce characteristics, job quality, and home health service quality of care.

Provide Evaluation Research for the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP)
Under a new 5-year contract, SSS will continue to provide expert evaluation research and support services for NDEP, including process and impact evaluation activities and general evaluation support. Additionally, SSS will finalize the results of the 2011 survey of the public and develop the final report for NDEP. The work will be conducted under a subcontract to Hager Sharp.

Assess Requirements for Nigeria Monitoring and Evaluation Project
SSS is providing technical assistance for the design and implementation of PEPFAR-related monitoring and evaluation activities under the USAID Nigeria Monitoring and Evaluation Management Services Project. The work is being conducted under a subcontract to The Mitchell Group.
Observation Services and Medicare Beneficiaries
SSS is analyzing a sample of 5 percent of Medicare beneficiaries to examine the range of services and payments used in the periods prior to and following hospital outpatient observation services (used to help decide if a patient needs to be admitted as an inpatient). SSS will present its findings in a report written in collaboration with AARP researchers.

Clinical Significance of Unique Device Identification
SSS will develop a white paper that describes systems currently used in hospital facilities to manage and track medical devices across a variety of their information systems (such as purchasing and inventory management) for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). SSS will identify key clinical scenarios in which health care providers—especially physicians—will have improved access to patient-centered information by the addition of Unique Device Identification (UDI) information. This information will assist FDA in enhancing adoption of UDI in hospital systems as FDA is poised to release the draft rule requiring manufacturers to use UDI for key medical devices.

International Influenza Clinical Research Support
SSS is providing technical, administrative, and clinical trial management services to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease’s Division of Clinical Research for two influenza studies. Clinical sites that have been engaged to conduct the study are in Mexico, Australia, Argentina, and Thailand. The work will be performed under subcontract to SAIC.

Analyze Medicare Part D Formularies Data
SSS is conducting programming necessary to answer questions of interest to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) regarding Part D formularies using CMS monthly formulary files, plan benefit package data, enrollment data, and information from the Medicare plan finder tool. The work is being performed under subcontract to NORC.

Computer Support for the National Institute on Aging
SSS is managing and editing research data, creating databases, developing data entry systems, and producing documentation for the Laboratory of Epidemiology, Demography, and Biometry.

Data Analysis of CMS Home Health Services Payments
SSS is assessing payment accuracy and access to home health services for low income beneficiaries, those with high levels of clinical severity, and those living in medically underserved areas. Through construction of a database, a series of quantitative policy analyses, and several small targeted surveys of stakeholders, the project will support suggested revisions to the home health prospective payment. The work is being performed under subcontract to L&M Policy Research.

Analyze Data on the Elderly Population
SSS will maintain and enhance the web-based, relational database and query system known as the AGing Integrated Database for the HHS Administration on Aging (AoA). The work will include integration of AoA data for federal, state, and community programs, and additional data on elderly individuals from national data sources. SSS will also develop analytical specifications for and conduct analysis of the data sets, prepare research briefs, and support planning of future data collection and dissemination activities.

Analyze West Virginia Hospital Discharge Data
SSS will collect, process, and edit inpatient hospital discharge billing data from West Virginia hospitals; create and provide adjudicated analytic files; and provide documentation, training, and technical support for these activities for the WV Health Care Authority.
Logistical, Technical, and Conference Support
SSS will provide support for the following events:

- Presidential Advisory Council Meeting (Office of AIDS Research [OAR])
- U.S.–India Joint Working Group Meeting on Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS (OAR)
- Pediatric AIDS Public Private Partnerships Meeting (OGAC)
- PEPFAR Enhancing Strategic Information Capacity Meeting (OGAC)

Corporate News and Recognition
SSS employee-owner Allegra Cermak was chosen to represent the United States on the Global Village Working Group planning committee for the Global Village that will be part of this year’s International AIDS Conference in Washington, DC. About 12 members were chosen from the United States, Nepal, Egypt, Chili, Switzerland, and South Africa for the working group to provide overall planning and guidance for the development of the Global Village and youth programs to take place at the conference. The Global Village will be open to the public.

An article in The Bahamas Weekly notes the contributions of comfort blankets for children at the Ranfurly Home for Children and the Elizabeth Estates Children’s Home delivered by SSS staff members Diane Norcutt, Beverly Valdez, Lei Frances, Peggy Van Ness, and Bill Cox in association with the 2011 Caribbean HIV Conference held November 18–21 in the Bahamas. The blankets were made by participants in SSS’ Security Blanket project.

Upcoming Conferences
Attend a presentation by SSS staff or visit the SSS booth at these upcoming conferences.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Molecular Med Tri-Con</td>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>February 19–23</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Presentation: Comparing Two Microarray Covariance Matrices Based on a Novel Conjugate Bayes Factor (James Zhou)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ConFoo Conference</td>
<td>Montreal, Canada</td>
<td>February 29–March 2</td>
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<td>• Session: Intro to Performant PHP Pages (Paul Reinheimer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships in Clinical Trials</td>
<td>Orlando, FL</td>
<td>March 4–7</td>
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