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The Research Newsletter

During the last year, our faculty and students have made great strides in research at **The College of Health Professions**. The Fall Semester featured visitors from around the world, faculty presentations and new learning opportunities. Read on for more about recent scholarly research!



Dr. Joshua Mendelsohn, M.Sc., PhD
At the Intersection of HIV Treatment & Prevention

HIV is a chronic condition for those with access to antiretroviral therapy; yet the epidemic is expanding among key populations who are vulnerable or marginalized, and therefore lack access to treatment and supportive services. In response to these needs, **Dr. Joshua Mendelsohn's** grant-funded work is exploring the intersection of treatment and prevention for HIV infection, with a focus on social determinants of HIV continuum of care outcomes. "Our interdisciplinary, interprofessional and international research teams have developed specialized tools for the collection of social, behavioral, and biological data from key populations in settings around the world," said Dr. Mendelsohn. "Our collaborative global partnerships include community organizations, academic institutions, international organizations, Ministries of Health, hospitals, service providers, and HIV-positive/at-risk communities." In current studies -- all supported by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) -- the research team is exploring the effectiveness of immediate antiretroviral therapy for reducing incident HIV infections among migrant and resident men in Shanghai, China. In northern Uganda, another recently funded study is seeking to develop and evaluate an innovative arts-based HIV stigma-reduction intervention, and in a cross-national Canadian study, Dr. Mendelsohn is analyzing data collected from an online and telephone-based

survey regarding HIV risk and relationship satisfaction among HIV-serodiscordant couples. In a novel collaboration with Lovisenberg Diaconal College in Norway that resulted in an NIH R01 submission, the team hopes to fund a study of a generic chronic illness self-management program at Northern Westchester Hospital, and explore applications for prevention and well being among HIV-positive populations in the US. The R01 team was led by Pace professor Dr. Natalie Stepanian and Dr. Kristin Heggdal, Subaward PI; Visiting Fulbright Scholar to Pace and Professor/Head of Research at Lovisenberg Diaconal. Additional team members included Drs. Carol Roye and Marie Larsen, Lovisenberg Diaconal.



Visiting Scholar

Exploring Healthcare through the Lens of Cultural Beliefs

Eric Kombey Wolete, a visiting Fellow from Yaounde, Cameroon, presented on numerous occasions this fall on the Pleasantville and New York City campuses on the impact of cultural beliefs on health outcomes and affordable and accessible healthcare. Wolete is a 2019 Fellow of the Community Solutions Program (CSP) sponsored by the US. Department of State and implemented by IREX. The guest lectures, hosted by CHP and the Helene and Grant Wilson Center for Social Entrepreneurship, centered around Wolete's work as co-founder and director of Worldwide Medical Center, a hospital that provides primary care to low-income patients and health promotion education to the community. Motivated by personal experience surrounding his mother's death after failed treatment by "traditional healers," Wolete is particularly passionate about reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and, among other goals, aspires to develop an independent, full-time Maternal and Infant Social Hospital.

The Wilson Center and CHP hosted Wolete at Pace during his fellowship with the goal of providing students with a global experiential learning opportunity, an experience that allows them to develop global awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Before returning home in early December, he joined 75 other 2019 Fellows at a fellowship completion graduation ceremony hosted by IREX at the U.S. State Department.



Andréa Sonenberg, PhD, WHNP, CNM-BC, FNAP, FNYAM Completing a Year-long Program with International Doctoral Students

From September 2018 through September 2019, **Dr. Andréa Sonenberg** advised doctoral nursing students **Isadora Costa** and **Marjorie Medeiros Melo**, Visiting Scholars from *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte* in Natal (UFRN). Dr. Sonenberg created a comprehensive plan of study for them during their year at Pace, which included auditing classes in PhD in Nursing and master's Family Nurse Practitioner programs, as well as simulation classes in the CHP Center of Excellence in Healthcare Simulation Lab. They also had observational clinical experiences with family nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives in the community and attended global health conferences at Harvard and Yale Universities. Dr. Sonenberg also supported and advised them as guest lecturers in developing two classes for CHP programs, developing and beginning their doctoral research studies, developing five scholarly presentations at Pace University, and developing and submitting two manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals. She has continued to advise them since their return to UFRN in September and hopes to be able to participate in their dissertation defenses in 2020.

With a research focus on the associations among social policies and population health, Dr. Sonenberg is particularly interested in the role of advanced practice nursing in improving access to care and health outcomes globally. Toward that goal, Dr. Sonenberg has established partnerships with nursing academic centers in Colombia and Chile, further promoting the advanced practice nurse role in Latin America. She is also an international collaborating member of the *Directorio do Grupos de Pesquisas no Brasil* (Directory of Research Groups in Brazil), through which she has advised and collaborated on research studies and co-authored five manuscripts, two of which were published in peer-reviewed international nursing journals this past year and three of which are currently in-review. The most recent partnership was established with *Universidad Mayor, Escuela de Enfermería* in Chile. The collaborative research investigation is in its earliest stages of development, the aim of which will be to research the advanced nursing roles and health outcomes across countries in Latin America.



**Dr. Ana Amaya, DrPH MPH
At the U.N. General Assembly on Universal Health Coverage**

In September 2019, Dr. Ana Amaya attended the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on universal health coverage at the United Nations. The meeting, held under the theme “Universal Health Coverage: Moving Together to Build a Healthier World,” aimed to accelerate progress toward universal health coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all. During this historic event, UN member states adopted the most comprehensive political declaration on health ever made at this level. “This declaration will guide the work of countries toward reaching Sustainable Development Goal 3 by investing in four major areas around primary health care. While this is an important achievement, it is crucial that countries are held accountable to these commitments,” said Dr. Amaya.

Dr. Amaya has conducted research on global health policy making and health systems strengthening for more than 10 years. She recently co-edited a special section for the Regions and Cohesion journal titled “[Multi-level Health Diplomacy.](#)”



**Drs. Lin Drury, PhD, RN, FNGNA and Sharon Wexler, PhD, RN, FNGNA
Studying Robotic Pet Therapy for Hospitalized Older Adults**

Drs. Lin Drury and Sharon Wexler researched the effects of robotic pets on outcomes for hospitalized older adults. Delirium, loneliness, and depression are contributing factors to cognitive

and functional decline in older adults, with delirium being linked to incidences of falls. According to research, pet therapy can be a successful intervention that improves mood and, as a result, may decrease falls.

According to Drs. Drury and Wexler, pet therapy is often not available at the time most needed by hospitalized older adults. Their study, conducted in a metropolitan teaching hospital, utilized a robotic pet in place of a live animal. Participants who were randomized to the experimental group received a robotic pet for the duration of their hospital stay. The robotic pets look, feel, and vocalize like a live animal, exhibit animal-like behavior, move and respond to touch. The study found that subjects who had a robotic pet during their hospital stay experienced better outcomes: decreased delirium incidence, decreased depression, decreased loneliness, and fewer falls as compared to subjects who did not have a robotic pet.

Contributing to the study were student researchers **Chava Pollak**, MSN, RN, and **Bianca DiSomma**, BSN, RN. The research team presented their findings at The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting in Austin, TX, in November.

Faculty Spotlight:

Erica Gollub, DrPH MPH



Dr. Erica Gollub, Associate Professor in the Health Science program, has conducted research related to women, HIV, and contraception for more than 25 years. She has tested and refined original behavioral interventions with female-initiated methods of contraception and HIV/STI prevention among diverse populations of women. She has received funding as Principal Investigator from both the NIH and CDC. In 2019, she received the Dean's Award for Outstanding Research/Scholarship and the Provost's Certificate for Prolific and Exemplary Scholarship.

Dr. Gollub's most recent research, partially funded by the Dean's Summer Research Grant, seeks to collect data on women's hypothetical attitudes towards the first anti-HIV vaginal ring (*Dapivirine Ring*). The ring was demonstrated as efficacious in two large African-based trials, has been recently approved in Europe, and is now headed for FDA approval. It is the first such discreet device for women, with numerous other such novel barriers in the testing pipeline. With **Dr. Carol Roye** co-investigator, the study will survey 100 Hispanic women at the Open Door Family Medical Centers in Ossining and Sleepy Hollow, NY, and results will inform the development of a targeted intervention to promote use of the device when it becomes available. Data on acceptability of the Nuva Ring contraceptive will also be collected in this new project, as part of a recent grant to Dr. Roye with Dr. Gollub as co-investigator.

Since arriving at Pace in 2016, she has also been sought out for an interview in a 2018 article

appearing in *Vice* regarding research on the [female condom](#) (subsequently reflected in Pace University media). As well, she has published an article with a Health Science undergraduate on [firearms and intimate partner violence](#) in the high-impact *Preventive Medicine*; subsequently featured in *Science Trends*, a Duke University originating global science web-based research platform.

A prolific author, Dr. Gollub has written 60 peer reviewed articles and several book chapters. Her recent publications in the *Journal of Women's Health* and in *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, address the links between hormonal contraception and HIV acquisition among women. Another paper in press at *PLOS One*, analyzes the prevalence and correlates of violence exposure among a large sample of African American adolescents attending public school in New Orleans. A recent publication in *Women and Health* addresses HIV risk and testing behaviors among Latina immigrants in Florida.

Currently in progress is work with Dr. Roye on a mixed methods study of sexual and reproductive attitudes and knowledge among young male college students, with a recently submitted manuscript for publication.

Global Research



CHP professors, **Rhonda Maneval**, EdD, RN, **Keville Frederickson**, EdD, RN, FAAN, and **Eileen Engelke**, EdD, RN, CNE, RN-BS presented their paper “Transform and Transcendence: Joy, Suffering and Death through the lens of Phenomenological Dissertations and Nursing” in June at the International Human Science Research Conference in Molde, Norway. Each year, the Conference brings together international scholars to share research and discuss matters of phenomenology.



In 2019, **Dr. Ana Amaya**, DrPH MPH presented on “Sustaining the Rights-based Approach in Times of Change: The UNASUR Case” at the American Public Health Association in Philadelphia; on “Regional health Policy in Turmoil: The South American Case” at the International Health Conference at Oxford University; and on Health Policy and Global Health Governance: The Effect of New Actors on Health Systems” for the Biology Department Seminar Series at Pace University.

In June, Pace College of Health Professions Lienhard School of Nursing hosted a three-day workshop featuring world renowned phenomenology



researcher **Max van Manen, PhD**, professor emeritus and distinguished scholar at the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, University of Alberta. Dr. van Manen, is the author of numerous books, including *The Phenomenology of Practice* and *Researching Lived Experience*. The intensive research methods workshop drew 38 participants from the U.S., Canada, Denmark, and Columbia, and included CHP faculty, researchers, and PhD students.



Student Research Posters

Pace University-Lenox Hill Hospital PA Program (NYC)'s recent graduate, **Tiffany Alvarez**, presented her poster, "Promising Anti-Cancer Properties of Metformin: A Novel use for a New Drug" at The Association of Physician Assistants in Oncology (APAO) 22nd Annual Oncology Symposium in Boston, MA recently.

Click the image to read more!



Conference Presentations by Faculty Members

Faculty members present their research to interprofessional colleagues throughout the year at professional conferences.

Click the image to read more!



Current Funded Research Projects

Faculty and students are supported to conduct their research through external and internal grants.

Carol Roye, EdD to Retire

As Dr. Carol Roye prepares to move on to the next exciting chapter in her life, we wish her bon voyage and thank her for her contributions to the College of Health Professions. During Dr. Roye's five years here as Associate Dean of Faculty Scholarship, she has enhanced and enriched this College Community immeasurably.

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