

Just When You Thought It Was Safe to Go Back in the Water

Beach Study Focuses on Health Effects of Water Pollution

by Michael S. Broder

There is nasty stuff in the water, but can swimming in it really make you sick? This summer, thousands of beachgoers at San Diego's Mission Bay are participating in the Mission Bay Water Evaluation and Testing Study, which examines the link between microorganisms living in the water and the health of people swimming at the beach. Scientists working on the study are also developing new ways to measure water quality quickly and efficiently. The project is led by **Jack Colford, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H.**, associate professor of epidemiology at the School of Public Health.

From Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, researchers expect to interview as many as 5,000 recreational water users and a control group of 3,000 beachgoers who do not enter the water. A bilingual team of interviewers, including UC Berkeley undergraduates, administers surveys to randomly chosen beachgoers as they prepare to leave for the day. Follow-up interviews are conducted by telephone 10 to 14 days after the initial surveys. During those interviews, participants are asked about their health since their day at the beach, including any illnesses they may have experienced. The data collected this summer will be analyzed and reported by next spring.

The findings will be used to develop new guidelines to help state and local governments and beach managers protect the health of beachgoers.

Colford says the findings will be used to develop new guidelines to help state and local governments and beach managers protect the health of beachgoers. As a result, there may be changes in the way recreational waters are monitored and beach closures announced. "Currently a problem that regulators and public health officials have is that the measurements they take in water can take from several hours to a day to come back, so they might end up closing the beach—or, conversely, leaving it open—the following day, when the conditions have changed," he says. "The rapidity of this process is one of the key elements we're trying to examine."



Holding the daughter of a city staffer, San Diego mayor Dick Murphy (left) tests the waters at Mission Bay along with city councilman Scott Peters. Below: A study tent at Mission Bay.

Working with Colford on the Mission Bay study is **Tim Wade, Ph.D. '02, M.P.H. '98**, one of his former students, now an epidemiologist with the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory of the EPA. When city officials in San Diego decided to pursue this type of research, they


approached Colford and Wade because of their expertise in waterborne infectious diseases. The UC Berkeley Survey Research Center and the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project are partners in the study.



The project has had a visible presence at the Mission Bay beaches, with tents set up at six main

swimming areas: Visitor Center Beach, Tecolote Shores, Leisure Lagoon, De Anza Cove, Crown Point Shores, and Bonita Cove. San Diego mayor Dick Murphy kicked off the study by taking a well-publicized dip in the bay. Beach balls bearing the study's name, which are given away as gifts to participants, have become popular items at the recreational area.

Mission Bay is an ideal site for the testing because it is a heavily used aquatic park in an enclosed bay that has occasionally experienced elevated levels of bacteria. An earlier study of the health effects of swimming was conducted in Santa Monica in 1995 by other investigators. "That prior study had such an impact that it led to an important California law, AB411, which governs when beaches have to be closed," says Colford, who also notes that older microbiologic techniques were used at that time.

Comparing the results of the studies will create a more complete picture of quality standards for recreational waters, he says. "Every beach is different, because of currents and wind and the number of people swimming. There will be a number of these types of studies conducted by different groups and by the EPA throughout the country. Hopefully, the whole jigsaw puzzle will fit together." 



Inside:

A Look at Commencement 2003



Dean's Message

I am happy to report that we have enjoyed a "vintage" (California-speak for "outstanding") year in 2002–2003.

Thanks to the work of the entire Berkeley public health community, we were able to increase our permanent full-time equivalent faculty position allocation from 47 to 49; receive approval for the development of an upper-division undergraduate major in public health; secure approval for four new

faculty recruitments (in the process of being filled); receive funding from the CDC for a new Center for Infectious Disease Preparedness; and significantly expand our community-based teaching, research, and service partnerships.

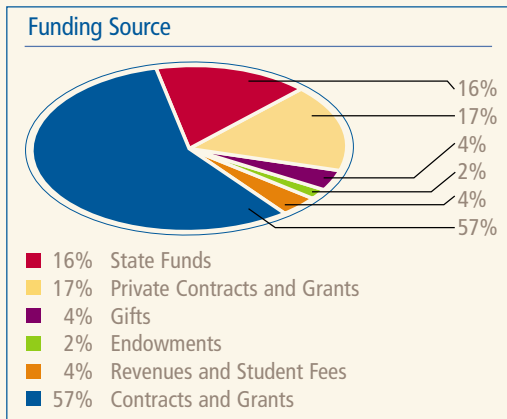
I am also pleased to announce two new appointments in the Office of the Dean. First, Dr. Tom Boyce has assumed responsibility as associate dean for academic affairs and research. Tom was previously director of our Joint Medical Program, now led by Dr. John Swartzberg. Tom succeeds Teh-wei Hu, who has returned full time to teaching and research; our thanks to Teh for his service over the past few years. Second, I am pleased to announce John Kaso's appointment as assistant dean for business operations. John comes to us from International and Area Studies, where he served as assistant dean for five years, and his experience on campus will be of enormous help. John succeeds Gail Grogan, who helped the school advance on a number of fronts during her six years of service, particularly in building a greater sense of community among faculty, staff, and students. We wish Gail and her family well as they return to their roots in Fresno and the Central Valley.

Of course, the accomplishments of the past year are only a means to the end of helping position the school to be even more effective in improving human health. This task is particularly daunting given the state's economic crisis. All campus units have implemented up to 5 percent temporary budget cuts for the coming year. The school is fortunate to be able to absorb these cuts at this point in time, due in large part to the support that we have received from our alumni, friends, and donors. I want to thank you for that support but also indicate that your continued, and if possible, expanded support will be essential to our ability to move forward. The chart on the left underscores the fact that only 16 percent of support for the school comes from the state. The remaining 84 percent comes from private sources and research grants and contracts. Given that reality, we will all need to work together as closely as ever to ensure our continued success.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Shortell, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Dean, School of Public Health
Blue Cross of California Distinguished Professor of Health Policy & Management
Professor of Organization Behavior



News and Notes

Public Health Degree Available to Undergraduates

Effective this fall, upper-division Berkeley undergraduates will be able to pursue a major in public health for the first time since 1968. The school's new undergraduate program, under the leadership of professors **Steve Selvin, Ph.D.**, and **Barbara Abrams, Dr.P.H., R.D.**, will offer curricular tracks in both biological and social sciences. The A.B. degree will be awarded by the College of Letters and Science.

With campus enrollment growing, there is increased demand for professional schools to serve the needs of undergraduates. In addition, there is a growing interest among students in pursuing health careers, as evidenced by the high volume of undergraduates who avail themselves of the school's curriculum.

"The new major will help draw bright Berkeley undergraduates into the health professions and reinforce the school's 'pipeline' approach to attracting quality students from diverse backgrounds," says Dean Shortell.



Undergraduate students enrolled in Professor Edward T. Wei's Introduction to Pharmacology and Toxicology class, above, are among those who may now pursue an A.B. in public health.

Genomic Research Conference Commemorates Historic Date

On April 25, the Center for Health Research sponsored a conference entitled, "Advances in Genomic Research: Implications for Science and Society." The date commemorated the 50th anniversary of the publication of the article in *Nature* laying out theories regarding the double-helix structure of DNA. Professors **Jodi Halpern, M.D., Ph.D.**, and **Thomas G. Rundall, Ph.D.**, cochaired the meeting, which included speakers on topics of bioscience, business, society and ethics, and future directions and issues. Many of the presentations from the conference are available online at <http://gr-ss.berkeley.edu>.



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New Center for Infectious Disease Preparedness Meets the Challenge of SARS

The paint in their new office space on University Avenue is barely dry, yet the staff of UC Berkeley's new Center for Infectious Disease Preparedness are already meeting the challenges presented by humankind's latest viral foe: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

In April of this year, as the potentially epidemic scope of the illness became a reality in nations around the world, the center's principal investigator, **Arthur L. Reingold, M.D.**, and recently appointed executive director, **Tomás Aragón, M.D., Dr.P.H.**, became front-line advisers. The two educated and counseled public health professionals, University officials, and policy makers locally and nationally.

Called upon for their expertise in interpreting the disease's transmission, virulence, origins, and projected short- and long-term impacts, center staff made themselves available to media outlets ranging from

The Washington Post and CNN to the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. Aragón, the coordinator of the University's SARS Public Health Response Plan, was instrumental in helping the administration negotiate the complexities of protecting the University's diverse and internationally mobile community from an outbreak.

As the specter of SARS dissipates, the center can return to facilitating preparedness for future crises. Through conferences, lectures, and intensive short courses, the center hopes to provide frontline public health and safety workers with training in effectively and efficiently detecting, investigating, and responding to infectious disease threats, both intentional and, as with SARS, naturally occurring.

"The SARS threat was both a curse and an opportunity," says Aragón. "It was a curse because we were threatened with a new contagious disease that spreads

"Preparing for SARS has made us much better prepared to face microbial threats — including bioterrorism."

—TOMÁS ARAGÓN



Tomás Aragón (right) with Chancellor Robert M. Berdahl.

like the common cold, has a high risk of death, and has no vaccine and no proven effective treatment; an opportunity, because the threat required us to work through the complexities of preventing an outbreak should the infection be introduced into the campus community. Preparing for SARS has made us much better prepared to face microbial threats— including bioterrorism."

—Johanna Van Hise Heart

Commencement 2003



[1] Henry Ocampo and A. Kilolo Harris; [2] Valentina Goloborodko, Alexandra Matveyeva, and Rosemary Hoban; [3] Song Liang and family; [Cover] Cherie Ng.



Commencement Speaker Stanton Glantz Ties Success to Courage and Conviction

"I would like to...talk about how to be a troublemaker and survive," began 2003 commencement speaker Stanton Glantz, Ph.D., professor of medicine and director of the Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education at the University of California, San Francisco. A long-time critic of tobacco, Glantz has spent more than two decades fighting for cigarette law reform. Following are excerpts from Glantz's speech, in which he advised graduates to let the courage of conviction lead them to success:

“ The thing that you should do with your life... is go where you want to go. It's a tough world out there and to really excel, to really succeed, especially if you are doing difficult things, you have to really love what you are doing and care about it. You cannot excel at something you are just doing as a job. ”

“ The important thing that we [Glantz and fellow anti-tobacco lobbyists] did was we went out to people and we empowered them with the science. We said this stuff, this secondhand smoke, isn't just obnoxious: it's actually dangerous. ”

“ It is amazing...about 15 to 20 people initially spawned an entire movement, and we have this huge multi-billion dollar industry on the run. It's quite gratifying. So that's why I say if you do what you care about, then you won't have a midlife crisis when you are as old as I am. ”

CELEBRATING 60 Years of Improving Human Health

Anniversary Event Calendar

This year the school commemorates its 60th anniversary with a series of occasions designed to bring together faculty, alumni, and students to discuss current issues and celebrate past achievements. The schedule includes special lectures, networking opportunities, and acknowledgement of leaders in the field of public health. Please join us for these events and help support the School of Public Health's teaching, research, and service. For updated information about School of Public Health events, please call Andrea Lum at (510) 643-6382.

2003

September 11, 1–6 p.m., Thursday

September 11th, Two Years Later: What Have We Learned from a Public Health Perspective?

Guest Speaker: Barry R. Bloom,
Dean, Harvard School of Public Health
Location TBD

September 29, 3:30–6 p.m., Monday

Public Health Alumni Association Professional Development Workshop

Two career-enhancing sessions for alumni and other public health professionals. Presenters: Lori Dorfman, Dr. P.H. '94, M.P.H. '89, Director, Berkeley Media Studies Group; and Barbara Staggers, M.D., M.P.H. '80, Director of Adolescent Medicine, Children's Hospital & Research Center at Oakland.

Elihu Harris State Dept. Building, 1515 Clay St., Oakland

October 9, 2–6 p.m., Thursday

Fall Research Symposium

Faculty members present current research to provide a snapshot of the wide range of projects under way at the school.

Alumni House

October 14, 4–5:30 p.m., Tuesday

Dean's Symposium, Penhoet Lecture

Guest Speaker: Harvey V. Fineberg, President, Institute of Medicine; Professor Emeritus, Harvard School of Public Health
Anita Baldwin Auditorium, Warren Hall

October 21, 3 p.m., Tuesday

Scholarship Tea

An event bringing together the school's 2003–2004 scholarship recipients with the sponsors who help make their educations possible.

Women's Faculty Club Lounge

November 13, 4–5:30 p.m., Thursday

Regents' Lecture

Guest Speaker: Steven A. Schroeder, Distinguished Professor of Health and Health Care, UCSF Dept. of Medicine (former President and CEO, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)

Location TBD

November 17, 6:30–8 p.m., Monday

APHA Social Hour

Socialize with fellow School of Public Health alumni attending the American Public Health Association's annual meeting.

Westin St. Francis Hotel, Elizabethan Room D, San Francisco

2004

February 28 (date tentative), Saturday

6th Annual International Health Conference

Jointly sponsored by UC Berkeley, UCSF, and Stanford University.
Stanford University

March 19, 6:30 p.m., Friday

8th Annual Public Health Heroes Gala

A gala celebration recognizing individuals and organizations for their significant contributions and exceptional commitment to promoting and protecting human health.

Location TBD

April 1, Thursday

Women's Health Panel

A discussion about issues in women's health in anticipation of May's observance of Women's Health Month.

Location TBD

April 17, Saturday

Cal Day

Take in all that Berkeley has to offer at the campus's annual open house, offering a variety of free activities, lectures, sports, and demonstrations for people of all ages and inclinations.

UC Berkeley



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