

Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Weekly Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2-6, 2026



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, February 4, 10:00 – 11:00 AM



Research Methods Meeting

Presenter: JungAe Lee, PhD, Assistant Professor, Biostatistics and Health Services Research

Title: Navigating Biases in Real-World Evidence: A Tutorial on Robust Study Designs for EHR and Claims Data

Abstract: This presentation provides a methodological overview of epidemiologic approaches for analyzing large-scale healthcare data, including electronic health records and insurance claims. Using the historical evolution of menopausal hormone therapy as a motivating case study, we illustrate

how evidence from randomized clinical trials and observational studies may yield divergent conclusions when methodological challenges are not adequately addressed. We focus on key sources of bias in pharmacoepidemiologic research, including healthy user bias, immortal time bias, and confounding by indication. The presentation reviews robust study designs in observational studies—such as new-user active-comparator designs, nested case-control studies, and self-controlled designs—and discusses their appropriate application across varying exposure patterns and clinical outcomes. Overall, this session aims to provide practical guidance for selecting study designs and statistical models that strengthen causal inference in real-world data analyses.

Bio: Jung Ae Lee, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Biostatistics in the Department of Population & Quantitative Health Sciences at UMass Chan Medical School. Her research focuses on real-world evidence, leveraging large-scale electronic health records, claims data, and wearable-device data to study cardiometabolic and cancer-related outcomes. She has extensive expertise in causal inference, longitudinal modeling, and pragmatic study designs, and collaborates closely with interdisciplinary clinical and public health research teams. Click [here](#) to join.

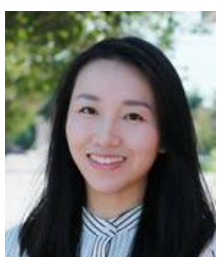


Monday, February 9, 11:00 – 11:30 AM

Live Webinar: OAI CORE Knowledgebase

Join our upcoming webinar: Current State of the Osteoarthritis Initiative (OAI) Data Usage and Introduction to the OAI Knowledgebase, presented by [Dr. Jeffrey Driban](#) (Director, OAI CORE Knowledgebase), Professor of Epidemiology, PQHS.

For questions or support, contact us at oaiknowledgebase@umassmed.edu.
[Register here.](#)



Monday, February 9, 1:00 – 2:15 PM

Gerontology Speaker Series

Presenter: Yalu Zhang, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook University

Title: Aging in Transition: How Shifting Living Arrangements Shape Later Life

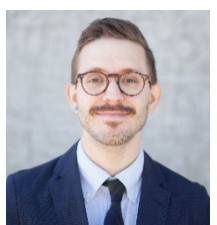
Abstract: Transitioning to living alone is a major life event, but is it a consistent risk factor for depression? Dr. Yalu Zhang will present a longitudinal analysis showing that the impact of living arrangements is dynamic and highly contextual. This series of studies identified a "critical window" of risk two years post-transition and highlights how rurality and family roles greatly affect outcomes. The seminar will also

discuss how older adults use active coping strategies to buffer these shocks and what this means for future community-based practices and social policies.

Bio: Dr. Zhang's research centers on aging, health equity, and social mobility, with a focus on applying advanced quantitative strategies to understand the nuanced dynamics of later life.

Zoom: <https://umassboston.zoom.us/j/94175483404> Password: Boston

For more information contact Qian Song: Qian.Song@umb.edu



Wednesday, February 18, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Research Methods Meeting

Presenter: Chris Wilson, MS, Quantitative Core Director, Seattle-Denter Center of Innovation

Title: Bridging the Gap: Integrating Patient-Generated Health Data into Healthcare Monitoring and Research

Abstract: The presentation will show preliminary results and the proposed framework for evaluating the utility of continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) data in predicting and understanding diabetes-related outcomes within healthcare systems. We compare and integrate CGM-derived metrics with hospital-based HbA1c values to assess

predictive performance for acute care utilization due to hypoglycemia, as well as complications including diabetic ketoacidosis, neuropathy, and retinopathy. Both traditional econometric models are employed to estimate causal associations, while advanced data

science approaches are used to enhance predictive accuracy and identify opportunities for improved monitoring and observational research.

Bio: Chris Wilson is a Senior Data Scientist with the Department of Veterans Affairs and serves as the Quantitative Core Director for the Seattle-Denver Center of Innovation for Veteran-Centered and Value-Driven Care. His work focuses on combining modern data science methods with traditional econometric and statistical approaches to identify the complex phenotypes that drive patient outcomes. Click [here](#) to join.

UMASS CHAN-HAYLLM COLLABORATION



International Joint Symposium on Medical and Healthcare AI: UMass Chan-Hallym Collaboration – January 28-29, 2026

DIVERSITY DIGEST

2026 FEBRUARY Monthly observance: Black History Month Weekly observance: *World Interfaith Harmony Week (Feb. 1-7) *Losar (Feb. 18 - March 4)	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 *National Freedom Day *St. Brigid of Kildare * Maghi-Purnima	2 *Imbolc (Feb. 1-2) *Candlemas *Constitution Day *Lailat al Bara'a	3 *Setsubun-Sai *Four Chaplains Day *St. Blaise Day	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11 National Foundation Day	12	13 Rio Carnival (Feb. 13-21)	14 St. Valentine's Day
	15 *Parinirvana Day *Meatfare Sunday	16 Presidents Day	17 *Lunar New Year *Seollal *Mardi Gras *Shrove Tuesday	18 *Ramadan (Feb. 17-18 sundown to sundown) *Ash Wednesday	19	20 World Day of Social Justice	21
	22 *Cheesefare Sunday *Foundation Day	23 *Beginning of Great Lent *The Emperor's Birthday	24 Día de la Bandera	25 Intercalary Days (Feb. 25-March 1)	26	27	28

Celebrating the Lunar New Year – February 17

On **February 17**, communities around the world will welcome the **Lunar New Year**, a celebration observed across many cultures in East and Southeast Asia, including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Tibetan traditions. The Lunar New Year marks the beginning of a new year based on the lunar calendar and is often a time for family gatherings, honoring ancestors, sharing meals, and setting intentions for the year ahead. It is both a joyful celebration and a reflective pause—an opportunity to release what has passed and step forward with renewed hope.

This year ushers in the **Year of the Horse**, a symbol of energy, movement, and courage. Traditionally, the Horse represents forward momentum, independence, and the confidence to act with purpose. As we mark this occasion, we invite our community to join in honoring the richness of cultural traditions that shape how people around the world mark time, renewal, and belonging. Celebrating the Lunar New Year reminds us that diversity is not only about difference—it is also about shared human rhythms of reflection, resilience, and new beginnings.



UMASS CHAN REMINDERS

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Holiday Schedule for 2026:

- Presidents Day – Monday, February 16th
- Patriots' Day – Monday, April 20th
- Memorial Day – Monday, May 25th
- Juneteenth National Independence Day – Friday, June 19th
- Independence Day – Friday, July 3rd (observed)
- Labor Day – Monday, September 7th
- Indigenous Peoples' Day – Monday, October 12th
- Veterans Day – Wednesday, November 11th
- Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 26th
- Day After Thanksgiving – Friday, November 27th
- Christmas Eve – Thursday, December 24th
- Christmas Day – Friday, December 25th

PQHS Weekly will be sent to all members of PQHS on Monday mornings. The intent is to provide a snapshot of what is going on that week in PQHS and to share our faculty and staff activities with the department. We depend on you to provide the items we need to share. Please send suggestions of events, faculty invited seminars & talks, honors, student thesis presentations, and news – new babies born! – to Judi (judi.saber@umassmed.edu) & Sarah (sarah.yeboah@umassmed.edu) by Friday each week.