

# THE CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS

# LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE D'ÉPIDÉMIOLOGIE ET DE BIOSTATISTIQUE



Summer Edition

L'édition été

2014

## NEWSLETTER | BULLETIN

# Pushing Student Research to the Next Level



Raywat Deonandan,  
Assistant Professor,  
Interdisciplinary School of  
Health Sciences,  
University of Ottawa

These are unique, tough times for young people finishing their studies and entering the competitive work world. Several global factors have made the experiences of their predecessors poor guides for how the current generation should navigate their careers. The

unprecedented number of graduates, grade inflation, record-high student debt, graduate schools with impossibly high entrance thresholds, and the movement of wealth and opportunity inexorably from the West to the East have created a grim employment atmosphere for many new graduates.

Epidemiology & Biostatistics are among a handful of fields that show high employment rates, and whose skills sets translate well to a variety of disciplines and workplaces. It's not surprising, then, that so many postgraduate programs focusing on population health sciences are seeing record high application rates.

It all adds up to one thing: the need for students to enrich their profiles to stand out from the sea of somewhat uniform, though excellent, applicants. One way to do so is to obtain

demonstrable, high level research experience.

There is nothing new in this particular revelation. Undergraduate students have been pursuing honours' projects and volunteer lab experiences for decades. But the need to formalize and communicate those experiences is now being realized.

At the University of Ottawa many years ago, James Gomes pioneered the inclusion of a formal undergraduate research conference that capped off his 4th year Epidemiology class.

...Continued on page 5

The CSEB Bulletin publishes in both English and French articles and notices on topics of interest to Canadian epidemiologists and biostatisticians. The CSEB Bulletin is posted on the website of the Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

## WEBINARS | WEBINAIRES

### An Overview of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging

Sep 29, 2014,  
12:00 - 1:00 PM EST

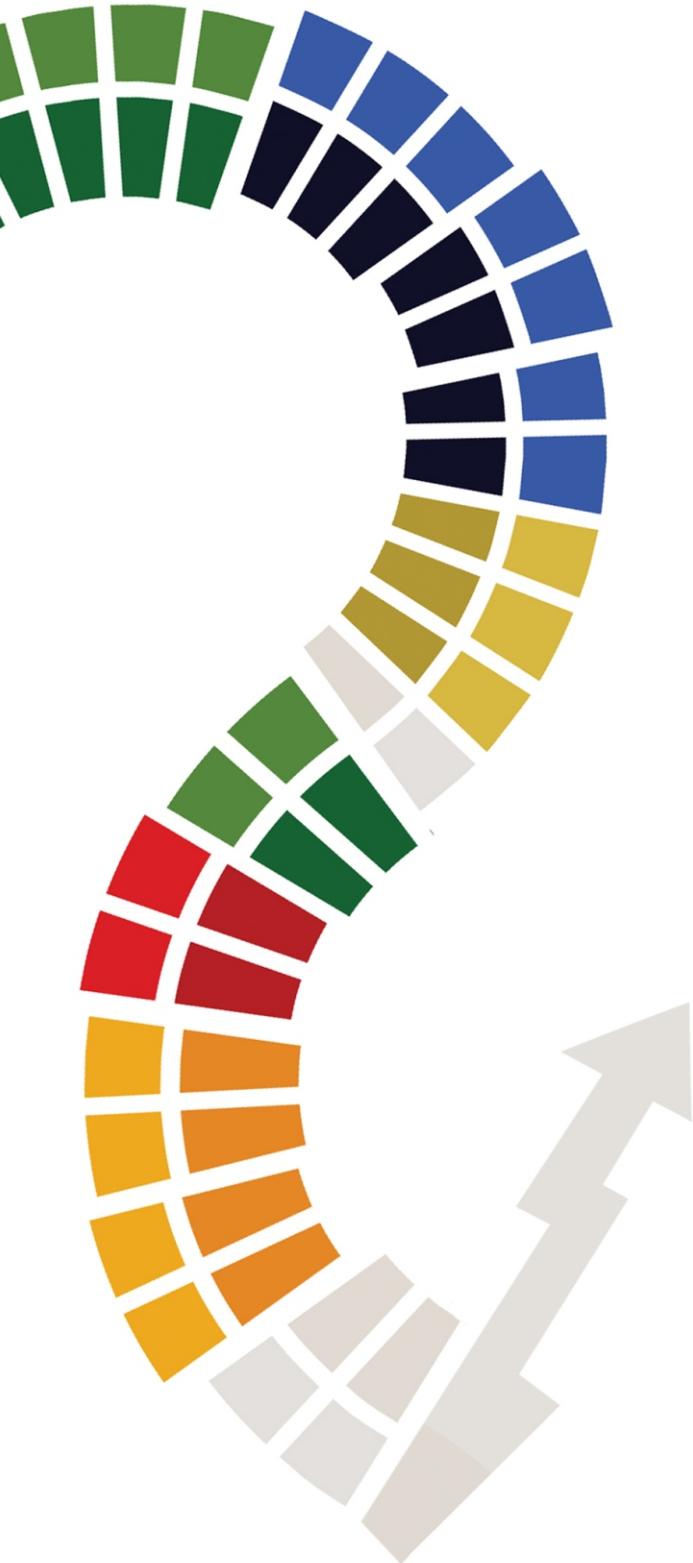
### Dollars and Sense: Using Health Economics to Inform Policy Decisions

Oct 16 - 17, 2014,  
Part I and II:  
1:30 - 4:30 PM EST

...For more details,  
see pg 11

... Pour plus amples  
renseignements voir p 11

Le Bulletin de la SCEB publie en français et en anglais, des articles et des annonces sur des sujets d'intérêt pour les épidémiologistes et les biostatisticiens canadiens. Le Bulletin est affiché au site Internet de la Société canadienne d'épidémiologie et de biostatistique.



# Editor's Note



Erin Russell,  
Editor in Chief,  
CSEB Newsletter  
Contact: [erin.leigh.russell@gmail.com](mailto:erin.leigh.russell@gmail.com)

When I agreed to take the editorial reins of the CSEB Newsletter, commencing with the summer 2014 issue, it seemed summer might never come. Fortunately, for those of us who enjoy the heat, the summer is now upon us.

And, thankfully for me, the society has been busy this spring — providing plenty of content for my inaugural issue as editor. The CSEB has hosted several highly informative webinars; two of which are summarized in this issue. Epidemiology and biostatistics students from across Canada gathered in Hamilton in May for the annual CSEB National Student Conference; this issue includes reflective pieces written by student attendees. Finally, the CSEB Annual General Meeting was held in June via teleconference and is summarized here.

I'm really excited about the opportunity to lead the CSEB Newsletter committee. Ray has worked hard to make this newsletter educational, entertaining and communal — with emphasis on the communal. I wholeheartedly echo his view that all CSEB members should feel a sense of ownership towards this publication. I look forward to working with the membership of the CSEB. Whether you are interested in joining the CSEB Newsletter committee, contributing as an author, or simply offering a suggestion, please do not hesitate to reach out.

# Merci, ce fut amusant!



Dr. Raywat Deonandan est membre de l'École interdisciplinaires des sciences de la santé à l'Université d'Ottawa, l'ancien Éditeur en Chef du Bulletin de la SCEB, et le nouveau Président des Communications de la SCEB.

Est-ce que ça fait déjà quatre ans? On dirait bien. Le temps passe vite lorsqu'on a du pain sur la planche! Avec ce numéro, je passe le flambeau de cette publication à notre nouvelle Éditrice, Erin Russell, qui s'avère déjà bien mieux organisée que je n'aurais pu espérer l'être.

Lorsque j'ai pris la relève en tant qu'Éditeur en Chef du Bulletin de la SCEB, ma mission auto-infligée était de ré-imaginer le ton de la publication. D'après moi, notre but était de connecter les membres de la SCEB aux activités de l'Exécutif, mais en même temps, de servir de pont entre le monde technique de l'Épidémiologie et des Biostatistiques et le monde plus doux des vraies expériences humaines. Ceci, d'après-moi, nécessitait que nous différencions notre petit bulletin des produits de communication plus secs qui consomment déjà notre monde professionnel.

La plupart d'entre nous passons déjà plusieurs heures semaine à lire des rapports techniques, des rapports gouvernementaux branleux, des publications sans âmes révisées par les pairs, et des pamphlets banals conçus pour des comités. Ce dont nous avions besoin, j'ai conclu, était quelque chose d'un peu plus amusant, plus honnête, et peut-être même plus pertinent.

Ceci voulait dire relancer le Bulletin avec un peu plus de panache personnel. Afin de produire un tel monstre, j'ai grandement fait appel au labeur étudiant. Les jeunes professionnels émergeant parmi nous rayonnent encore de ce genre d'enthousiasme et d'honnêteté émotive que plusieurs gens plus âgés comme nous semblent avoir perdu... ou oublié comment exprimer. Mon niveau de confiance

envers cette décision a augmenté après qu'Erin---une étudiante au moment, mais qui est ensuite devenue notre nouvelle Éditrice bien sûr--- a écrit un morceau brillant et personnel portant sur ses préoccupations pour sa carrière en Épidémiologie... dans le format d'un résumé d'article.

C'était précisément le ton que je désirais atteindre.

Je suis particulièrement fier de quelques débats que nous avons aidé à mettre à l'avant-scène. Notre ancien Président, Colin Soskolne, a exprimé de manière éloquente les dangers éthiques et physiques liés à la non-prohibition d'exportation d'Asbestos canadien, et l'a fait de manière plus accessible que les arguments offerts dans les publications portant sur les politiques. Et nos articles sur l'abolition de la version longue du recensement exploraient plusieurs facettes de la controverse, et ont éventuellement mené à un commentaire dans la Revue canadienne de santé publique.

Il est important de se le rappeler--et j'aime bien le répéter-- cette publication appartient à tous les membres de la SCEB. Ceci veut dire que si vous avez un problème, une idée ou une pensée que vous aimeriez introduire à la plus grande communauté nationale, ce bulletin est une plateforme sécuritaire et accessible auquel vous avez recours.

Je vous encourage donc à prendre en considération l'idée de jouer un plus grand rôle, tant au niveau de la SCEB que de cette publication. Aidons Erin à faire évoluer ce monstre en une partie essentielle de nos vies professionnelles.

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For more information or to register contact:  
Maxine Reitsma, Program Coordinator,  
UVic Division of Continuing Studies  
Email: [maxiner@uvic.ca](mailto:maxiner@uvic.ca);  
Phone: 250 721 6477



# The 2014 CSEB Student Conference - At A Glance

Vanja Gavranic,  
Chair, 2014 CSEB  
National Student Conference

Dear CSEB Members,

The planning committee for the 2014 CSEB National Student Conference would like to thank those of you who attended the conference or volunteered to judge abstracts and presentations! We hope that you enjoyed the experience and will return to the conference next year in Toronto!

This year, the student conference took place at McMaster University on May 9 and 10, 2014. The first conference day consisted of workshops, and the student presentations and award

ceremony were held on the following day.

On Friday May 9, students attended workshops given by the following speakers: Dr. Mitch Levine and Bernice Tsoi ("A primer on health technology assessment: From basic concepts to model building in health economic evaluations"), Dr. Lorne Rothman ("An Introduction to Survival Analysis in SAS"), Dr. Joseph Beyene ("Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies: Challenges and Opportunities in Research Synthesis"), and Dr. Michael Wilson and Kaelan Moat ("Knowledge translation: Finding and Using Research Evidence to Inform Decision-making about Health Systems"). Students also attended a career panel featuring Dr. Mark Oremus, Dr. Jean-Eric Tarride, and Dr. Carolee Carson, representing the fields of academia, industry, and government, respectively. This busy conference day was concluded with appetizers and games at the campus pub.

On May 10th, there were several oral and poster sessions throughout the day, and in the evening keynote speaker Dr. Gordon Guyatt, Canada's Health Researcher of the Year 2013, presented to students the history of evidence-based medicine. Several faculty and student judges evaluated the presentations and prizes were awarded for best oral presentations (3), best poster presentations (3), and top tweets (3).

This year's planning committee consisted of Vanja Gavranic, Sohail Mulla, Zahra Sohani, Bernice Tsoi, Abha Athale, Thuva Vanniyasingam, Elena Tsangaris, Kevin Quach, Arnav Agarwal, Ayesha Rana, Rebecca Jeffery, Alex Ratzki-Leewing, and Stacey Guy. The group worked closely with Thy Dinh throughout the planning process.

We hope that you enjoyed the conference and look forward to seeing you in Toronto next year for the student conference and biennial conference!



Members of the 2014 National CSEB Student Conference Planning Committee.

## TOP TWEETS FROM #studentcseb2014 | LES MEILLEURS «TWEETS» DES #studentcseb2014

Jordan Robson (@jordrobson): Nearing 100 twitter followers thanks to the #studentcseb2014 twitter contest #Milestone #WorkingTheNet

Tom Ferrao (@tomferrao) : Great posters and presentations at #studentcseb2014 the future of health research is in good hands #heartfelttweet

Katherine McKenzie (@therealepigEEK): Did you know that fish exposed to high levels of BPA have more female babies? #studentcseb2014 #TheMoreYouKnow

# Pushing Student Research to the Next Level

..Continued from page 1

Today, that conference is an annual event that serves as the major class assignment for three different Epidemiology classes in both French and English. Each year, the conference is run by the local chapter of CSEB, and features local scientists who act as judges for students' independent research. Judges' scores are incorporated into the students' final grades. We did a study on students' perceptions of this approach, and you can access it here:

<http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/en/handle/10393/26164>

In general, students found the experience useful in helping decide their career futures and at least as challenging their future career choices as a major written assignment or exam.

Lately, we've taken steps to help students use that experience to enhance their resumes. Since the event was ostensibly peer-reviewed, it qualifies as a formal scientific conference presentation. The university's library system has set up an online repository for students to upload their research posters, so that they are searchable via Google Scholar and other open search engines. The repository creates a permanent URL that can be linked to from authors' resumes or websites for every uploaded piece of work.

To browse our students' uploaded research posters, go here:  
<http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/en/handle/10393/30962>

Most Canadian universities host open access repositories for professors' and students' original work. This kind of sharing model, in partnership with initiatives to encourage students' independent research, can serve to both enhance students' research skills and to help them be more competitive in the market of

## 2014 NATIONAL CSEB STUDENT CONFERENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS:

**The CSEB would like to congratulate Vanja Gavranic and her team of student organizers at McMaster University for organizing a very successful event. The 2014 Student Conference was held from May 9-10 with over 200 student delegates from across the country.**

**We would also like to thank the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics for supporting this event.**

**We would like to highlight the student winners at the conference:**

### Oral Presentations:

1st Place: **Jiawei Wang,**  
University of Montreal

*Consumption of added sugars and development of metabolic syndrome components among a sample of youth at risk of obesity.*

2nd Place: **Lawrence Mbuagbaw,**  
McMaster University

*A systematic review of trials published in major clinical journals shows some improvement in the quality of reporting in abstracts of randomized controlled trials since the publication of CONSORT extension for abstracts.*

3rd Place: **Asha Mohamed,**  
Queen's University

*Sociodemographic variations in exposure to fast food restaurants and its association with fast food consumption among youth.*

### Poster Presentation:

1st Place: **Kevin Quach**  
McMaster University

*The effectiveness of pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions in improving restless legs syndrome severity among patients on dialysis: A systematic review.*

2nd Place: **Eleanor Hung,**  
Queen's University

*The effect of shift work on salivary cortisol levels in female hospital workers.*

3rd Place: **Jiyoong (Jane) Park,**  
McMaster University

*Applicability of Statins as Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease on South Asians*

# The Ontario Veterinary College at CSEB 2014!

Kate Bishop-Williams, Alexandra Swirski, Ellen McDonald, Msc. Candidates, Population Medicine, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

Seven Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) graduate students from the University of Guelph presented their research at the CSEB student conference. We made the early-morning drive to McMaster on Saturday - each of us excited to arrive to interact with other students and to present a poster or talk!

Students in the Department of Population Medicine at the OVC study diverse topics, including human, animal, and environmental epidemiology. OVC presenters shared research on heat stress impacts on humans and dairy cows in Ontario, Inuit health in Iqaluit, giardia in the Grand River, the impact of pet loss on owners, and improving small holder pig farming in Kenya.

The OVC has a unique epidemiology program - in Ontario and across the country there are few others like it! At the OVC, the Department of Population Medicine houses epidemiologists, veterinary health specialists in cattle, pigs, sheep, and poultry, behaviour and welfare specialists, public health specialists and theriogenologists – showcasing work which looks at animal health, human health, environmental health, and often use principles of EcoHealth. This unique combination of expertise and skill sets in our tight knit department opens communication across disciplines, allowing us to improve our research approaches and build on each

others' varying knowledge – it also makes working in the department so much more interesting! With such a broad knowledge set within Population Medicine we are able to foster many epidemiological approaches including quantitative and qualitative analyses, spatial epidemiology, and advanced modelling procedures.

For each of us, this was not our first conference. Each of the students at the OVC has an opportunity to present their research in a College-wide conference annually. Each student in Population Medicine also presents in the student seminar series. Specifically, we (Kate, Alexandra and Ellen), have presented at Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAF&MRA), plain language, veterinary and epidemiology conferences among others. Most recently, 4 of the 7 OVC students attending CSEB presented at the Global Development Symposium at the University of Guelph. CSEB was the first student run conference that we had attended, and as such was very different from our other experiences. The dynamic of the student-run

environment and student-to-student networking was unique to this conference and had different value for us.

Veterinary epidemiology programs across Canada host the national Canadian Association of Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventative Medicine (CAVEPM) conference annually. The Department of Population Medicine at the University of

Guelph strives to have student representation at both CSEB and CAVEPM conferences each year. Attending conferences such as CSEB which are traditionally based on human medicine are an excellent way for students to network and broaden the scope of research our department does.

The Department of Population Medicine at the University of Guelph was thrilled to be able to contribute to the National CSEB Student Conference 2014 at McMaster and we look forward to students and faculty attending both the Biennial and Student Conferences next year in Toronto!



The students awaiting the first session of the morning at the 2014 National CSEB Student Conference at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

# Biostats Corner: Introduction to SAS Survival Analysis



Lorne Rothman,  
Principle Analytic Services  
Specialist,  
SAS Canada



Survival analysis is an important collection of specialized methods used to analyze time to event data. It is not only widely used in epidemiology, biology and medicine but in many areas of business including banking and telecommunications.

The response variable in survival analysis is often called a failure time, survival time, or event time, is usually continuous and can be measured in days, weeks, months, years, and so on. Examples of events in the medical sciences and business include deaths, onset of disease, loan defaults, and cancellation of subscriptions.

SAS offers powerful tools to analyze survival data including survival curve plotting, analysis and hypothesis testing, accelerated failure time models, and the semi-parametric Cox Proportional Hazards model. These survival methods are accessible through a point and click interface using Enterprise Guide, or through SAS programming.

Our half day *Introduction to SAS Survival Analysis* workshop at this year's CSEB conference focused on a SAS programming interface, and featured exploratory analysis and hypothesis testing of survival curves (PROC LIFETEST) and Proportional Hazards modeling (PROC PHREG) for right-censored data. We provided a fairly comprehensive coverage of tasks for the beginner SAS survival analyst in health.

The workshop included an introduction to survival analysis concepts and terminology. We featured hands-on demonstrations to generate survival and hazard curve plots, and non-parametric tests for differences between groups using the LIFETEST procedure.

We fit Proportional Hazards models and showed how to plot adjusted survival curves and output predicted survival functions using the PHREG procedure. Assumptions of proportional hazards and correct model form were explored and tested using simulation based plots and hypothesis tests on model residuals.

Remedial techniques for non-proportional hazards were featured including stratified Cox models, and models with time dependent interaction terms. The generation of hazard ratios and confidence intervals for non-proportional hazards, and more generally for any terms involved in interactions were also featured in hands-on demonstrations.

We at SAS are often asked how to model competing risks. In response, our R & D team has added competing risk to the newest release of SAS statistical software. Competing risks arise in studies when subjects are exposed to more than one cause of failure, and failure due to one cause

excludes failure due to other causes. A useful and widely used quantity in competing risk analysis is the cumulative incidence function, which is the cumulative probability of failure from a specific cause over time. We showed how to model competing risks and produce cumulative incidence function plots using new features of the PHREG procedure.

The workshop room was packed with over 50 attendees, and the audience was keen and asked many insightful questions! In addition to survival analysis, SAS introduced the free University Edition to students as well as other no-cost education resources for students. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak at this year's conference and teach epidemiologists and biostatisticians SAS tools that can help with their work and research. Thank you kindly for inviting SAS. We look forward to further involvement at the CSEB conference.

# Careers in Epidemiology



Maxwell Tran,  
Bachelor of Health Science  
Student,  
McMaster University

I had the pleasure of attending the CSEB National Student Conference at McMaster University on May 9-10, 2014. For me, the most educational event was the career plenary session. The panel of speakers included Dr. Mark Oremus, Associate Professor, School of Public Health and Health Systems, University of Waterloo; Dr. Jean-Eric Tarride, Director of Health Economics and Reimbursement at AstraZeneca Canada; and, Dr. Carolee Carson of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The three speakers provided eye-opening insight into the worlds of academia, industry, and government, respectively.

Dr. Oremus explained several benefits that academia provides. Firstly, Dr. Oremus enjoys great flexibility in his schedule. Epidemiologists and biostatisticians in academia can expect independence; they have the option to work from home or elsewhere, as long as they get the job done. There is the opportunity to teach and interact with bright students, some of whom have similar career aspirations, as well as the opportunity to collaborate with researchers from diverse fields. Researchers in academia also enjoy flexibility in their research foci. Dr. Oremus's primary research interests are aging, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease, but he is also interested in population and public health, among other topics. Dr. Oremus did mention one potential drawback of academia, which is the idea of 'publish-or-perish'. Academic scientists are mandated to

publish a specific number (at minimum) of peer-reviewed scientific articles each year. Dr. Tarride described his journey from a pharmacoeconomics consultant to academic scientist to a director in the private sector. In his role with AstraZeneca, Dr. Tarride manages a disciplinary team that conducts cost-effectiveness studies of various drugs. Some benefits of a career in the private sector include excellent pay and the opportunity to travel with costs covered by the company. In the question and answer session, Dr. Tarride emphasized the importance of developing professional connections. If he was hiring and had to choose between two equally qualified candidates but one came highly recommended, the choice would be obvious.

Dr. Carson discussed her position within PHAC as a Veterinary Epidemiologist and Risk Assessor for the Canadian Integrated Program for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance. I was surprised to learn of the high-pressure situations government scientists can encounter. For instance, Dr. Carson recalled an instance when her team had to prepare a statement for the media in half an hour. She also stressed the importance of being involved in university and continuing your education. As an undergraduate student, Dr. Carson worked for a small animal veterinarian, volunteered at a wild bird clinic and at a local humane society, and worked as a research assistant at the University of Guelph. Through these activities, Dr. Carson discovered her research interests. She later returned to the University of Guelph to complete her PhD in veterinary epidemiology.

I am grateful to all three speakers for sharing their expertise and addressing audience questions so thoroughly. While I am still unsure of my future career path, I am excited by the wonderful journey that inevitably lies ahead of me.

## 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE ANNUELLE

The CSEB AGM took place this year on June 18th as an online meeting. For those of you who are not aware, the AGM is a face-to-face meeting during the CSEB biennial conference and takes place online during the off-conference years. The meeting was chaired by outgoing president and now past president, Susan Jaglal. The full meeting minutes are available on [our website](#). We would like to thank everyone who participated and Maxwell Tran for drafting the meeting minutes.

L'AGA de la SCEB de cette année a eu lieu le 18 juin sous format de rencontre en ligne. Pour ceux et celles qui ne sont pas au courant, l'AGA est une rencontre en personne qui a lieu lors du congrès biennal de la SCEB, et se déroule en ligne lors des autres années. La rencontre a été présidée par la présidente sortante de charge, Susan Jaglal, qui est maintenant l'ancienne présidente. Les minutes complètes de la rencontre sont disponibles sur [notre site web](#). Nous désirons remercier toutes les personnes qui ont participé ainsi que Maxwell Tran qui a rédigé les minutes de la rencontre.

## 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Significant changes in 2013/2014 include a change in management processes that came into effect in the fall of 2013, re-branding with a new logo and website, and new layout for the CSEB newsletter.
- Preparations are underway for the 2015 CSEB student and biennial conference to be held in Toronto from June 1 to June 4.
- Face2Face Management is our professional conference organizer for 2015.
- CSEB is in now in good financial footing since the changeover from a professionally managed society to a predominately volunteer-run society, with net assets of a little over \$46,000 on April 30, 2014.
- Parker, Prins and Lebano have been retained as CSEB's accounting firm.
- CSEB's presence and use of social media continue to strengthen with increased interactions via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and more podcast offerings.
- The CSEB membership base was at its highest at 398 members for 2013/14.
- Over the course of 2014/15 we hope to expand membership, increase membership engagement, offer new webinars, develop the mentorship program, and deliver a spectacular conference.
- The new board of directors was approved (See page 13).

## RÉSUMÉ DE L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE ANNUELLE 2014

- Les changements significatifs qui ont eu lieu en 2013/2014 incluent un changement au processus de gestion à partir de l'automne 2013, une nouvelle image comprenant un nouveau logo et site web, un nouveau format pour le Bulletin de la SCEB.
- Les préparations sont entamées en vue du congrès étudiant 2015 de la SCEB et du congrès biennal qui vont avoir lieu du 1 juin au 4 juin.
- Face2Face Management est l'organisateur professionnel pour les congrès 2015.
- La SCEB est maintenant dans une bonne situation financière depuis le passage d'une société gérée professionnellement à une société largement gérée par des bénévoles, avec des actifs de plus de 46 000\$ en date du 30 avril 2014.
- La firme Parker, Prins and Lebano a été retenue comme firme de comptables de la SCEB.
- La présence de la SCEB au sein des médias sociaux continue à grandir avec l'augmentation des interactions via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, et une offre accrue de baladodiffusions.
- Le nombre d'abonnés à la SCEB a atteint son plus haut point en 2013/14 avec 398 membres.
- Au cours de l'année 2014/15, nous espérons étendre l'abonnement, augmenter la participation des membres, offrir de nouveaux webinaires, développer des programmes de mentorats, et livrer un congrès spectaculaire.
- Le nouveau Comité de direction a été approuvé (voir page 13).

# Ma première conférence au Canada

Mamadou Dakouo,  
Etudiant doctorat,  
Université de Montréal

Du 9-10 mai 2014 j'ai participé pour la première fois, depuis mon arrivé au Canada en septembre 2013 en provenance de Bruxelles (Belgique), à une conférence. J'ai participé aux activités de la conférence surtout le 10 mai 2014 parce que je suis arrivé

dans la soirée du 9 mai à Hamilton en provenance de Montréal.

La journée du 10 mai 2014 à l'Université McMaster j'ai été très vite impressionné par la présentation des posters. J'ai vite été frappé par le dynamisme des présentateurs des posters. J'ai eu l'impression que chacun cherchait à « vendre » son travail avec un dynamisme impressionnant. J'ai senti cette volonté des présentateurs d'occuper l'espace.

Comme présentateur oral, j'ai vraiment apprécié l'organisation presque parfait de l'évènement. J'avais l'impression que ce n'était pas un

évènement organisé par des étudiants mais plutôt par des professionnels. J'ai trouvé également que les présentations étaient de grande qualité.

C'était une belle expérience qui m'a permis d'apprécier le dynamisme de la recherche canadienne et surtout de comprendre jusqu'à quel point les universités canadiennes accompagnent et orientent leurs étudiants vers les publications scientifiques.

**CSEB Podcasts are now available on iTunes:**  
<http://bit.ly/SiIxDF!>

# Telling Compelling Health Stories Through Infographics



Lindsay Jolivet,  
Journalist/Writer and  
Media Relation Specialist.  
Canadian Institute for Advanced Research

One of the most powerful examples of what infographics can accomplish for health research took place well before the Internet, in 1854, when a physician named John Snow began investigating an outbreak of cholera in the neighbourhood of Soho, London.

Snow found that nearly all the deaths during the outbreak were the result of drinking from a water pump on Broad Street. He visualized his data on a map that became a breakthrough in our understanding of how the disease spreads. This early infographic is a powerful example of how visualizing health information can illuminate its knowledge, and spread it to audiences that are difficult to reach with scientific writing alone.

Social media and online platforms have resulted in a surge of interest in using infographics for communicating a wide range of data, and many health organizations have begun to utilize this tool, including the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Canadian Institute for Health

Information and Public Health Ontario (PHO).

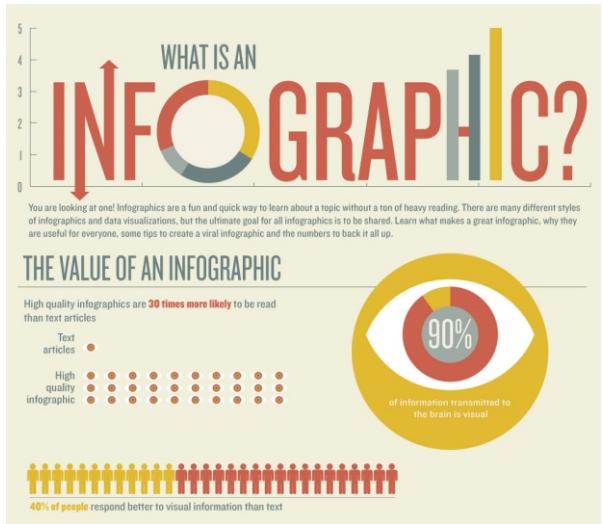
But communicating successfully using visual techniques requires careful consideration of which facts to include and a clear angle. Many infographics become visual OpEds — a case made through charts, images and words in support of an underlying argument. Find your message, keep it simple and shape your visual plans around it.

Choose which points or patterns within your data best represent the trend or change you're trying to show, and don't bog down the message with too much methodological detail. Put the source of your information at the bottom of the infographic, so that people can go back and read the original paper, or more material, if they want the

entire story.

Next, consider what audience you're trying to reach with your information. Health professionals don't need complex research broken down to the same level as members of the public whose attention you're trying to capture on social media. For an audience of policymakers, you may want to gather a more substantial body of evidence that draws on historical data, or the costs of certain health conditions to the public wallet.

What emotion do you want to evoke with your



www.customermagnetism.com

infographic, and to what end? An infographic about the importance of measles vaccination might aim for a sense of concern and urgency, directed at parents you want to convince to vaccinate their children. Context can help to hit the right note emotionally. Historical, numerical or geographical context can help audiences understand big numbers that are difficult to compute at a glance. Rather than saying 100 of 1000 people receive treatment, say one in 10.

Pulling these ideas into a crisp visual concept requires sticking to a few well-chosen fonts and using colours sparingly to create patterns with your information. Group related information together with colours or shapes to guide viewers' eyes over the page. You can use tools such as IBM Many Eyes, Google's Fusion Tables or Tableau Public to visualize data yourself. However, the task of choosing colours and images that best reflect the tone you're aiming for is sometimes best accomplished with the help of a designer. Hiring a designer doesn't eliminate the need to think hard about your message and goals. The cost of an infographic project will depend on many factors, including whether or not you have a clear plan that won't need many revisions.

Visual representations offer a great opportunity for telling compelling health stories. They can be a tool for knowledge outreach or public health campaigns, with a view toward catching eyes before they capture hearts and change minds.

[Editor's note: For more on infographics, check out Lindsay's webinar on our YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZ4t\\_F6qq7Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZ4t_F6qq7Q)]

# Online Op-Ed Writing for Epidemiologists and Biostatisticians



Prithwish De,  
Epidemiologist,  
Canadian Cancer Society

Ever wanted to write your own blog or op-ed piece but were too afraid to try? Perhaps you didn't know how to approach writing a blog or the whole idea of one was too foreign? These were some of the concerns addressed by Karen Born and Jeremy Petch of the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute of St Michael's Hospital in their March webinar to CSEB members about op-ed writing for epidemiologists and biostatisticians.

Karen outlined a few reasons to write a blog or an op-ed. You might want to get your work or research out to the public, raise awareness about an issue, dispel a health myth, promote yourself, or exercise your freedom of speech. However, the prevailing

research and public health culture can be an impediment to most of us in these fields. We are often risk-averse and may be uncomfortable with the rapid exchange of information that characterizes online debate. Overcoming this fear, while embracing the opportunity to share knowledge and learn from others, is part of the challenge and opportunity of being engaged in online discussions.

There are several benefits to writing a blog for those of us working in the health field. For one thing, writing a blog about research topic can significantly shorten the time needed for one's research to get published and reach our intended audiences, including our colleagues and the general public. Blogs are a great way to reach the social web and for researchers and public health practitioners to participate in the conversations that pertain to them. The latter is especially important at times when non-evidence based information can prevail in the online world and can thereby influence the media and policy-makers. By participating in online conversations, epidemiologists and biostatisticians can influence the accuracy and relevance of information that can impact public policies or knowledge on a health issue.

Blogs can take various formats, from

being generated by an individual, a research team or scientific community (e.g. a group of experts on a topic), an organization (e.g. journal-initiated), or by websites that host high-volume guest blogs and other content on variety of topics. Several examples of each of these formats were mentioned.

The Healthy Debate ([healthydebate.ca](http://healthydebate.ca)) website offers such an online forum for a controlled and unbiased source of healthcare and health policy information. As part of the editorial team for Healthy Debate, Karen and Jeremy outlined the features and editorial process for this platform, which accepts written contributions from the public, clinicians/researchers, and students.

Some helpful tips were offered by Jeremy for writing an impactful blog, including thinking about your audience, finding a good hook to draw in readers, focusing your blog on one idea, using plain language, and using personal anecdotes to introduce readers to a scientific subject.

The webinar was followed by a lively discussion by participants. For those of you who missed it, the recording of the full webinar and discussion period can be found here:

<http://youtu.be/DvCqKMuyMkE>

## UPCOMING WEBINARS | WEBINAIRES À VENIR

The webinars are only offered in English  
Les webinaires sont offerts en anglais  
seulement.

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE CANADIAN LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON AGING

Presented by Mark Oremus, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Public Health and Health Systems, University of Waterloo, Associate Scientific Director, Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging

**Dates & Times:**  
Sep 29, 2014. 12:00 – 1:00 PM EST

**Registration Fees:**  
This webinar will be free to CSEB members

and student non-members.

**Regular Non-Member** – \$20.00 + HST

Go to

<http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/CSEB/cseb-webinar-clsa-september-2014/> to register.

### DOLLARS AND SENSE: USING HEALTH ECONOMICS TO INFORM POLICY DECISIONS

Presented by Thy Dinh, PhD(c), MSc, Senior Research Associate, Health Economics, The Conference Board of Canada

**Dates & Times:**

**Part I:**  
Oct 16, 2014, 1:30-4:30 PM EST

### Part II

Oct 17, 2014, 1:30-4:30 PM EST

### Registration Fees:

**Regular Member** – \$50.00 + HST

**Student Member** – Free

**Regular, Non-Member** – \$100.00 + HST

**Student Non-Member** – \$50.00 + HST

Go to

<http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/CSEB/cseb-webinar-health-econ-october-2014/> to register.

Please contact [secretariat@cseb.ca](mailto:secretariat@cseb.ca) for more information.

# President's Message

Dear CSEB Members,

I would like to start his message by welcoming you to a new membership year and by thanking you for being a part of this organization. In particular, I would like to thank those members who, year after year, continue to support the CSEB and our activities. It is because of your contributions we were able to provide more student awards and free webinars than ever before. The CSEB is stronger than ever because of our members and our many volunteers who have dedicated much of their time to developing and implementing new initiatives as well as the society's administrative activities that we often take for granted. Following the Annual General Meeting we hit the ground running in several of our program areas. For example, planning for the 2015 conference is well underway with Eduardo Franco serving as the Scientific Chair. We plan to hold several conference planning meetings over the summer in preparation for the call for abstracts in fall 2014. Our Chair of Professional Development,



Dr. James Valcour, is developing an exciting slate of new webinar offerings starting this fall. If you are interested in delivering a CSEB webinar please contact us at [secretariat@cseb.ca](mailto:secretariat@cseb.ca). Finally, we have big plans for the Communications and Membership committees. We would like to further develop our CSEB Experts Database, increase our outreach on university campuses, and develop more efficient and effective ways of communicating with you.

I would be amiss if I did not take the time to thank my predecessor and friend, Susan Jaglal, for being such a great partner and mentor these past few years. I have learned a great deal from her and I look forward to continuing to work with her on the Board now that she is our past president.

We have some great things in store for you in 2014/15 and we hope that you continue to be engaged with the society.

Thy Dinh, MSc

President | Présidente

# Message de l'ancienne présidente

J'aimerais prendre cette opportunité pour remercier tous nos membres du comité de direction (anciens et présents), aux membres d'office, aux bénévoles étudiants et aux membres,



nous avons réussi à rebâtir la Société avec succès. J'ai bien hâte de céder le flambeau à notre nouvelle présidente, Thy Dinh, qui a supporté la SCEB de manière ardente tout au cours de son mandat sur le Comité de direction. Son enthousiasme et dévouement va assurer la continuation d'un avenir brillant pour la SCEB. En reflétant sur nos réalisations principales, nous devrions être fiers de plusieurs choses, telles que notre nouveau logo, site web, stratégie de médias sociaux, bulletin, augmentation de nos bourses de voyages étudiantes, conférences et séries de webinaires réussies ainsi que notre nombre grandissant de

membres. J'ai très hâte à notre congrès biennal qui va avoir lieu en juin 2015 à Toronto, avec notre organisme parrain le Dalla Lana School of Public Health. Le Président Scientifique du congrès, Eduardo Franco, ainsi que les divers comités travaillent déjà très fort à la planification d'un événement spectaculaire. Ce fut un honneur d'avoir œuvré en tant que Présidente de la SEB et d'avoir eu la chance de travailler auprès de collègues dédiés en provenance de partout au pays. Je suis confiante que la SCEB va continuer à s'épanouir et à remplir sa mission de renforcer la science et la pratique de l'Épidémiologie et des Biostatistiques au Canada. J'ai bien hâte de vous voir tous et toutes à Toronto en juin prochain.

Sincèrement,

Susan Jaglal, PhD

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