

At Joint Statistical Meetings, Statisticians Shed Light on Healthcare Issues from Clinical Trials to Diabetes to PTSD in Iraq War Veterans

ALEXANDRIA, VA, JULY 15, 2009 --- At the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) in Washington DC, statisticians will share their findings on the role of statistics in a variety of healthcare issues, ranging from the design and execution of clinical trials to providing treatment to Iraq war veterans with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). JSM, the largest annual gathering of statisticians in North America, will be at the Washington (DC) Convention Center August 1—6.

“Statisticians are called upon daily to apply statistical methods to medical research, pharmaceuticals development and many other areas of health and medicine,” said Sally Morton, ASA president. “They provide critical guidance when determining what information is reliable and which predictions can be trusted.”

Participants in JSM roundtables and other sessions include statisticians from the Food & Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control, the National Center for Health Statistics, the National Cancer Institute, the Tropical Medicine Research Center (Jamaica), plus a number of non-profit institutes, pharmaceutical companies and universities around the globe. Sessions are organized in two-hour timeframes, with several presentations of about 15 minutes, followed by Q&A. Statistical posters stand alone; they visually tell a story from the data about some phenomena revealing the conclusions that can be drawn. There are numerous poster sessions focusing on medical research and health issues.

*****Note: Members of the press can register to attend any of the conference sessions online at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2009/index.cfm?fuseaction=pressregistration>*****

Some of the JSM sessions focusing on health and medicine are described below; additional sessions on this subject can be found via the JSM online program, where you can search on keywords, date, type of program, presenter's name or affiliation. Link to the program at:

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2009/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=main>.

Making a Difference: Providing Statistical Support for NIH-Sponsored Clinical Trials Sunday, August 2, 2—3:50 pm, Room CC-141

Presenter: *Marian Ewell, The EMMES Corporation (presentation begins 2:25 pm)*

Ewell was one of the first recipients of the Cox scholarship, which exists to encourage more women to enter the statistical profession. Since graduation from the Harvard School of Public Health, Ewell has worked to support NIH-sponsored clinical trials, first as a post-doctoral fellow at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and later at the EMMES Corporation in Rockville, MD. In her talk, she will give examples of applications of statistics to public health and biomedical research, and discuss how this field has given her opportunities for collaboration, leadership, and great personal satisfaction.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2009/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=303018

How Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is Changing Disability Measurement among Returning Veterans: What Can We Do?

Monday, August 3, 2—3:50 pm, Room CC-102A

Panelists: *Michele Connolly, Sweetgrass Consulting, LLC; Paula Schnurr, Veterans Affairs National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder; Ronald Manderscheid, SRA International; Cille Kennedy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

PTSD is a major concern for veterans returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although nearly 20% of returning service members reported PTSD symptoms, only about half had received treatment. PTSD can affect work, earnings and quality of life for many years. A major policy debate is how best to identify and provide compensation for veterans with PTSD.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2009/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=activity_details&sessionid=204150

Statistical Challenges in Medical Research: What Consumers Need to Know

Monday, August 3, 10:30 am—2:20 pm, Room CC-143A

Presenter: *Ronald Gauch, Marist College (presentation begins 10:35 am)*

Gauch explores the statistical features inherent in clinical trials that make it so difficult to come up with the right answers. No matter how skilled and diligent the research team, their trial may still produce the wrong conclusions. Consumers, healthcare professionals as well as the general public should be aware of the liabilities that threaten clinical investigations.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2009/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=303942

Diabetes as a Potentially Disabling Condition: Studying Supports to Prevent Unemployment, Health Decline, and Reliance on Government Assistance

Tuesday, August 4, 8:30—10:20 am, CC-L Street Bridge

Presenter: *Tammy Tom, University of Hawaii (Poster presentation)*

The Hawaii Demonstration to Maintain Independence and Employment is a federally funded study examining diabetes as a potentially disabling condition and the influence a supports intervention has on health, employment, and government program participation.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2009/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=303312

Who Donates Blood?

Tuesday, August 4, 8:30—10:20 am, CC—L Street Bridge

Presenters: *Richard A. Forshee, FDA; Mark O. Walderhaug, FDA*

The poster analyzes the relationships between demographic and socioeconomic variables and the probability of donating blood. Understanding how demographic and socioeconomic factors are related to blood donation will improve the management of risks related to blood products, improve models of the blood supply for various contingency planning purposes, and provide important inputs for many quantitative risk assessments of the safety and adequacy of the U.S. blood supply.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2009/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=304401

About JSM

JSM is held jointly with the American Statistical Association (ASA), the International Biometric Society (ENAR and WNAR), the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS), and the Statistical Society of Canada. More than 5,000 statisticians from government, industry and academia are expected to attend the 2009 JSM, which features a range of activities, including more than 2,500 presentations, panels, roundtables, poster presentations, and continuing education courses. There also is an exhibit hall (with state-of-the-art statistical products and opportunities); a career placement service; and social and networking opportunities. Complete program and registration information for the 2009 JSM is available at the JSM web site at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2009/>.

About the American Statistical Association

The American Statistical Association (ASA), a scientific and educational society founded in Boston in 1839, is the second oldest continuously operating professional society in the United States. For 170 years, ASA has been providing its 18,000 members serving in academia, government, and industry and the public with up-to-date, useful information about statistics. The ASA has a proud tradition of service to statisticians, quantitative scientists, and users of statistics across a wealth of academic areas and applications. For additional information about the American Statistical Association, please visit the association's web site at <http://www.amstat.org> or call 703.684.1221.

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